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Current Issues in Alberta's Francophone School Jurisdictions: Educational Leaders' Understandings

by

Richard A. Slevinsky ©

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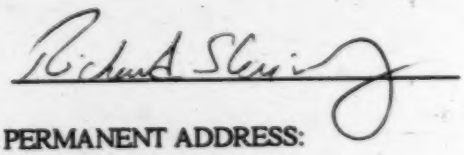

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Dated this 29th day of September, 1997

DEDICATION

To Karen and Mikaël
for their patience, understanding, encouragement, and support,

and

to the excellent teachers I have had the good fortune of having.
I single out the following individuals as exemplars of outstanding practice:

Mme Jeannette Létourneau,
truly the most inspiring elementary teacher who has taught me;

Mme Cécile Bielech,
whose example as a secondary teacher continues to guide my own practice;

and

Dr. Margaret Haughey,
to me, one of the finest academic teachers at the University of Alberta.

ABSTRACT

In 1994, the Alberta government established the required structures which permitted the francophone minority to manage and control its own schools. As of August 1997, the newly established Francophone Regional Education Authorities were operating 14 autonomous schools. The purpose of this study was to determine the current issues facing key decision makers of these francophone schools and to examine, in part, how these issues were being addressed.

The findings of this interpretative study are organized into three sections. The first of these provides a description of the structures which set the context for the main findings of the study. The second section provides an overview of the current issues facing Alberta's francophone school jurisdictions, and the third section relates to the participants' assessment of the future prospects of francophone education in Alberta.

The second section, current issues, represents the main findings of this study. Five categories of current issues emerged. The first category of issues relates to the community. Because the community is made up of individuals from many sources, it was found that the francophone community had difficulty agreeing on a common vision for itself as well as for its schools. The second issue relates to the difficulty these newly established schools are having to establish themselves as credible alternatives for the potential clientele. The third issue is resources. Participants suggested that although much had been gained in recent years, individuals working in the area of francophone schooling still do not enjoy equity with those working in majority schools. The fourth issue has to do with enrollments. To date, it appears only 10% of potential students are enrolled in these schools. The fifth issue raised relates to the degree of management and control. Participants question the overall degree of autonomy actually enjoyed by key policy makers. With respect to addressing these issues, it was found that the process is context bound and, as such, is influenced by many environmental forces which are beyond the control of educational leaders.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM. 1

Personal Background. 1

Background to the Study. 2
Assimilation. 4
Significant Historical Events. 5
Canada. 5
Northwest Territories. 6
Alberta. 7

Reflections. 14

Purpose of the Study. 14

Statement of the Problem and Sub-problems. 15

Definitions. 16

Significance of the Study. 17

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD. 19

Research Design. 19

Method. 20
Document Analysis. 20
Interviews. 21
Pilot Study. 21

Participants and Data Gathering. 22
Data Analysis. 23
Trustworthiness. 23
Validity. 24
Reliability. 25
Multiple Understandings. 25
Assumptions. 25
Delimitations. 26
Limitations. 26
Ethical Considerations. 26

CHAPTER III

STUDY FINDINGS. 28

The Structures. 28
The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. 29
Local Communities Respond to the Charter. 29
Calgary Responds. 30
Edmonton Responds. 30
Saint Isidore Responds. 31
Saint Paul Responds. 32
The Dickson Judgment. 33
Responses to the Judgment. 33
The Franco-Albertan Community. 34
The Provincial Government Response. 34
The first small task force. 35
French Language Working Group. 35
Francophone Governance Implementation Committee. 36
Changes to the School Act. 37
The Francophone Education Regions and their governing structures. 38
Other structures. 41
Current Issues. 44
The Community. 44
Sparsity. 44

The Nature of the Francophone Community. 45
Sources. 45
Nature of community. 46
The School Community. 52
School clientele. 54
Communication. 55
Establishing Credibility. 56
Getting Started. 56
Societal Status. 61
Language status. 61
Factors influencing language and school jurisdiction status. 63
Le Projet éducatif. 65
Vision. 65
Le projet éducatif et sa programmation. . . . 66
Professional development. 69
Implementing the projet éducatif. 70
Student evaluation. 70
Leadership. 71
Overall leadership. 71
School leadership. 73
Effecting change. 76
Resources. 77
Funding. 77
Equity. 77
Federal funding. 78
Provincial funding. 81
Working Together to Maximize Limited Resources. . . 82
The Pan-Canadian Project. 87
A provincial consortium. 88
Special needs. 88
La francisation. 88
Distance education. 89
Role of Stakeholders. 89
The roles and responsibilities of the individual. . 90
The roles and responsibilities of the home. . . 91

The roles and responsibilities of school employees. . 92
The roles and responsibilities of school councils. . 93
The roles and responsibilities of the school. . . 93
The role of the community. 96
The role of the majority. 98
Enrollments. 99
French Immersion Program Impact. 100
Historical involvement. 100
One program for two clienteles. . . . 100
Outcomes of the French immersion program for the francophone student. 101
The French immersion program for the partially assimilated student. 102
Competing for students. 102
Lack of history. 102
Recruitment. 103
Difficult to change program. 103
Identification of minority students. . . . 104
Sufficient numbers for economic viability. . . 104
School location. 105
Recruitment strategies. 106
Declining enrollments. 106
Difficult to convince Francophones. . . . 107
Afraid of growth. 107
Retention. 108
Migration. 108
Distance from schools. 108
Lack of credibility. 108
Compromised social setting. 108
Residential program. 109
Degree of Management and Control. 109
The Provincial Structure. 110
La D.E.F. 110
Alberta Education. 111
Observations of the Issue of Management and Control. . 112
No agreement among Francophones themselves. . 112

Pressure to do the same as the majority. . . 112
Too many structures. 113
We are different. 113
Convincing those in control. 114
Lack of power. 115
Language use. 115
Accessing power and exerting influence. . . 116
The fear of being punished. 117
Taking our rightful place. 118
Achievement testing program. . . . 118
The role of the Language Services Branch. . . 119
What is best for the child?. 119
Exclusive right to provide a francophone education. . 120

Future Prospects. 122
Our Students have Rights. 122
The Quality of French is Improving. 123
Assimilation Continues. 123
Addressing the Issue of Assimilation 124
Implications for Other Language Groups. 125
A Positive Climate. 126

Summary of Study Findings. 126

Concluding Remarks. 129

CHAPTER IV

REFLECTIONS OF THE FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE. . 130

The Structures. 130
Current Issues. 132
The Community. 132
The Role of History. 133
The Effects of a Sparse Population. 134

The Minority Complex. 135
Community Aspirations and Social Changes. . . 136
The Societal Context in which Francophone Schools are Being Established. 137
Economic Status of Language. 138
Language Variation. 138
The Programs of Studies. 140
Multiple Clienteles. 141
Resources and Support Systems. 141
Resources. 142
Support Systems. 143
Role of Stakeholders. 143
The role of the home. 143
The role of the school. 145
The role of teachers and school employees. . . 147
The role of the community. 147
The role of the majority. 148
Enrollments. 148
Economic Viability and Admission Policies. . . 149
Demographics. 150
Students at Risk. 151
The Need to Learn English. 151
The French Immersion Program. 152
So Why do They Leave?. 153
Autonomy and Societal Status. 154
Future Prospects. 156

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FURTHER RESEARCH. . . 158

Implications for Practice. 158
Recommendations for the Community. 158
Putting Differences Aside. 159
Becoming More Inclusive. 159
Empowering Parents. 160

Recommendations for School Jurisdictions. 160
Recruitment and Promotion. 160
Program Offered. 162
Recommendations for the Home. 163
Recommendations for the Majority. 163
Establishing Equity. 163
Student Evaluation. 164

Implications for Further Research. 164

REFERENCES. 167

APPENDIX A - The Charter of Rights and Freedoms. 173

APPENDIX B - Interview Guide. 175

APPENDIX C - Participants' Letter of Consent. 178

APPENDIX D - Participating Jurisdictions' Letter of Consent. . . . 181

APPENDIX E - Bibliography. 184

APPENDIX F - Résumé. 191

List of Tables

Table 3-1 School Governance of Alberta's School Jurisdictions. . . . 39

List of Figures

Figure 1-1 The Seven Francophone Education Regional Authorites of Alberta. . 3

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

Personal Background

Well before the passing of the Alberta Act of 1905, a significant number of francophone pioneers and settlers under the guidance and direction of the clergy had already established themselves and founded several communities in what was to become Alberta. Many of these small rural francophone communities continued to survive and remained relatively intact over the following 50 years due in part to the leadership and efforts offered by such institutions as the clergy and L'Association canadienne française de l'Alberta. Although the French language and culture did survive to this point, the insular nature of these communities was about to change due to the environmental forces of the postwar period. These forces included such phenomena as urbanization, the transformation of the telecommunication industry, and an increased mobility in the work force.

Many francophone communities were affected by these environmental forces. One such community which has experienced these forces is Saint Paul, Alberta. Initially established by the Oblates in 1896 as a Métis colony, this community was transformed in 1909 with the arrival of 600 francophone settlers (Lacombe, 1990). These settlers went on to establish a vibrant francophone community which served to safeguard and promote its language and its culture over the next 40 to 50 years. However, during the 1950s and 1960s, the foundations of this community were challenged. Such technological advances as the telephone and television brought the outside world into this community. Technological advances in the field of transportation resulted in a more mobile work force as well as a more transient society in general. In addition, this advancing technology was beginning to give rise to the phenomena known as centralization and urbanization. Although many of these advances served to better the quality of life in general, they did, however, threaten the language, the culture, and the nature of the francophone community which had survived relatively intact until the post war period.

My personal story is somewhat set in this context. My father, who is of Ukrainian heritage, left Two Hills in 1951 to take up farming in Saint Edouard, a francophone parish just east of Saint Paul, Alberta. He purchased a farm from one of the original francophone settlers who was retiring. This farm happened to be adjacent to my maternal grand-parents' homestead and before long, my father had married into a francophone family. Over the next

20 years, my parents continued to farm in this francophone community and raised nine children of whom I am second eldest. Interestingly, however, yet somewhat sad, my older brother and I were the only two members to have begun school proficient in French and to be educated in the French program which was provided to francophone students at the time. Of all siblings, we were the only two to reach adulthood proficient in French.

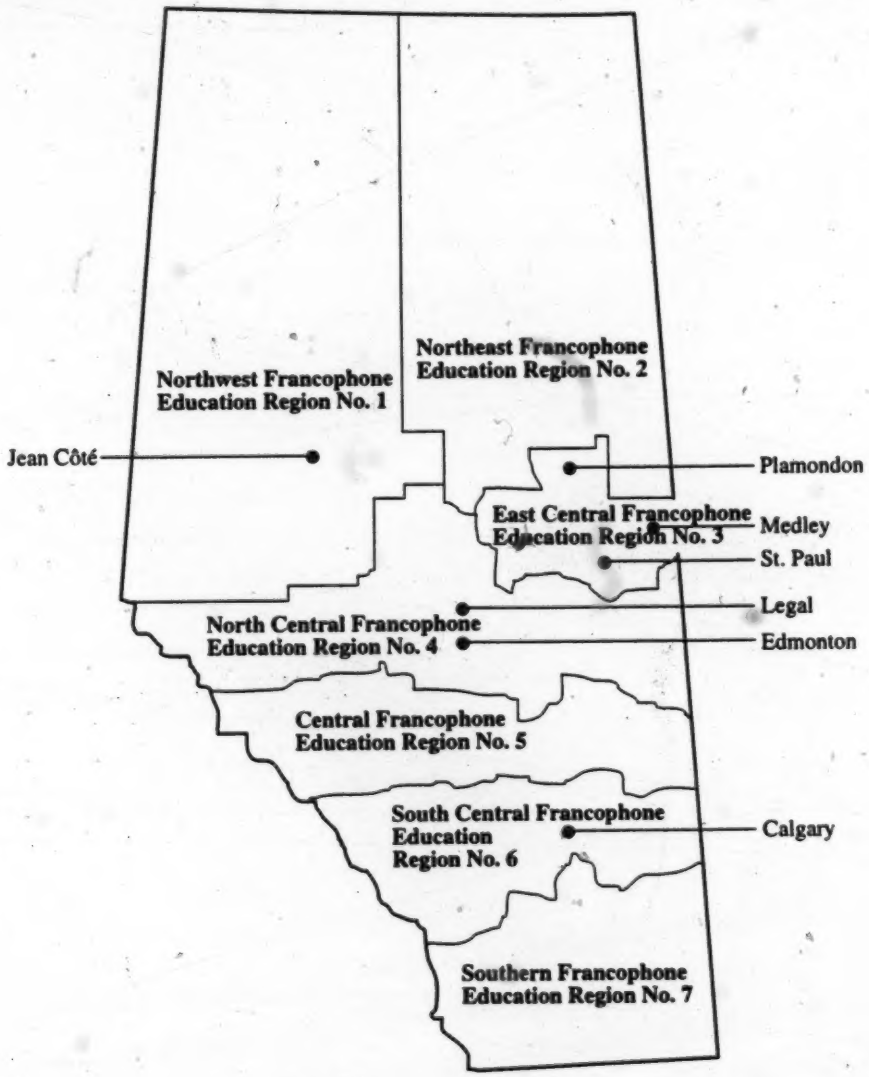
From Saint Paul, I went on to university to pursue a career in teaching and school administration. Given the national interest in bilingualism and my own cultural and linguistic background, I spent the first 10 years of my career working in the area of French as a second language which included French immersion. In 1988, I went to work for the provincial government where I advised government officials on policies governing official languages in Alberta. At this time, I had the opportunity to work with key stakeholders in the francophone community and became interested in the many issues this community faced. The most interesting of these was the issue concerning the establishment of francophone schools which was before the Supreme Court of Canada. The outcome of this case was such that the francophone community won its case "granting it not only the right to establishing their own schools, but the right to manage and control these" (Mahé v. Alberta). Although this ruling, also referred to as the Dickson Judgment, represented a major victory for the francophone minority community in Alberta, it sent a message across the country to all jurisdictions with respect to minority language schooling and set the stage for the establishment of autonomous minority language schools. Now that a number of these have been established there is a need to determine the current issues faced by these recently established autonomous school jurisdictions.

Background to the Study

In 1994, the Province of Alberta created seven Francophone Education Regional Authorities (Alberta Education, 1994, p.8). (See Figure 1-1.) These authorities, which together cover the entire geographical area of the province, were established to provide the administrative structure necessary to manage and control French minority language schooling. Although this may have seemed a rather uneventful occurrence for most Albertans, for the French minority language population, it represented victory at the end of a struggle which had lasted over a century.

The establishment of autonomous French minority language schools means more to Franco-Albertans than simply being in control of their schools. It means, in large part, the survival of both their language and their culture. As a people who cherish their linguistic

Figure 1-1 The Seven Francophone Education Regional Authorities of Alberta



Source: Guide de mise en oeuvre de la gestion scolaire francophone, Alberta Education, Edmonton, 1994, p.8.

and cultural heritage, the biggest challenge facing Francophones living in a minority situation is resisting the forces of assimilation. Few individuals living in a minority situation can totally escape the forces of assimilation; the most vulnerable to these forces

tend to be the children. As can be appreciated, for Francophones living in Alberta, children are the best and perhaps the only means of transmitting both the language and the culture from one generation to the next thereby guaranteeing the survival of tomorrow's community.

To describe the background to this study, I will begin by briefly discussing the issue of assimilation. Following this, I will provide an overview of the historical events which eventually resulted in the establishment of those structures which were required to establish autonomous francophone school jurisdictions in Alberta.

Assimilation

Assimilation can be defined as "un mécanisme par lequel un individu ou un groupe devient semblable à un groupe différent en perdant ses caractéristiques ethnolinguistiques particulières y compris sa langue maternelle" (Hamers & Blanc, 1983, p.446). Accepting this as a definition, it would appear that conceptually, assimilation is somewhat complex.

The first element of the definition to stand out is that assimilation is between two groups; one which gives and one which receives. However, recipients in this situation do not receive from the other group without incurring a cost to themselves. Lambert (1974) and Landry (1984) both stated that when individuals learn a second language in addition to their first language in an environment which values those individuals' first language, the result is an additive bilingualism. When this is the case, there is also a positive effect on these individuals' cognitive competence. However, when the reverse occurs, the effects are not neutral. Lambert and Landry both found that when individuals learn a second language in a setting where their first language does not have the same status as the dominant language, those individuals will do so at a cost to the development of their first language. In addition, learning a second language in this situation does not enhance cognitive competence and will take its toll on these individuals' self esteem. This phenomenon is at work when francophone students living in a minority setting and are enrolled in a French immersion program. Landry referred to this as subtractive bilingualism. Once an individual has lived this experience, the assimilation process is well underway.

The other interesting aspect to the definition presented is the notion that there are factors which can lead to assimilation. In the Alberta context, this mechanism includes all those variables which have an effect on the individuals' learning and maintaining of their first language. Examples of such variables would include television, radio, billboard advertising, the language of commerce, and the availability of child care services in French.

It appears that this mechanism can be quite powerful in the Alberta context. According to Landry and Allard (1988), it is because of this mechanism that the assimilation rate for Franco-Albertans is 63%. This means that 63% of Francophones who learn French as their first language will no longer be able to function in this language in their life time.

As discouraging as this statistic is, it nevertheless served as a motivator for the community to forge ahead and do what was deemed necessary to preserve the language and culture as best it could with the little resources it had. The one institution that the franco-albertan community fought for was the autonomous francophone school. The following section traces the events which led to the establishment of these schools in Alberta.

Significant Historical Events

Language, religion, and education have been key issues in Canadian history. Given that these issues were present before Alberta became a province, this section will present a brief overview of these issues in what was to become Canada. After this, these issues will be traced to the Northwest Territories and eventually to that part of the Territories which would become Alberta.

Canada

Historically, one of the most contentious issues to dominate the Canadian political arena has been language. In the area of education, language has and continues to be a hotly debated subject. This issue can be traced back to the 1760s when the British, after defeating the French colony in a military confrontation, attempted to impose their language and mentality on the people and institutions of Lower Canada. One of the institutions to resist the imposition of the British ways was the Catholic Church. The Church at the time had many roles; one of which was to provide educational services to the French-Canadian people living in Lower Canada (Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française, 1983). The Church continued to assume a protective role in education until the issue was finally resolved with the passing of the Education Act of 1841. This Act granted the right to dissent based on religious affiliation. Given that the French-Canadians were by and large Catholic and the British, Protestant, the legislation served to protect not only religious instruction but language as well. This important legislation ultimately found its way into the Constitution Act of 1867 thus granting responsibilities relating to Education to the provinces. However, what eventually served the francophone people of Québec rather well did not do the same for those Francophones living in a minority situation in the rest of Canada (Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française).

Northwest Territories

The first French-language school to be founded in that part of the Northwest Territories which would eventually become Alberta was at the Lac Sainte Anne mission in 1842 (Martel, 1991). During the years to follow, the Catholic missionaries established schools throughout this territory, many of which used French as the language of instruction (Motut, n.d.). These schools continued to be established based on the powers granted to the religious orders of the day in the Education Act of 1841. In 1875, the Northwest Territories Act was past and was amended in 1877. This Act and its amendments gave Francophones living in the Northwest Territories the right to attend Catholic schools and further, permitted French as the language of instruction (Smith, n.d.). However, this situation was soon to change.

The issue which caused concern for the Francophones living in the Northwest Territories was the Manitoba Schools question.

> With the Public Schools Act [of 1890], the Manitoba government eliminated the separate school system (Catholic and Protestant) and entrenched unilingualism. [In addition, f]rancophone Catholics lost management of their independent schools, which became state property. [As a result,] instruction in French and the teaching of French and religion were prohibited (Martel, 1991, p.114).

Two years later, in 1892, Francophones in the Northwest Territories would become subject to a similar fate with the Haultain Resolution. The purpose of this Resolution was in effect to make English the official language of the Territories both in theory and in practice. Although never officially proclaimed into law, this resolution was nevertheless brought into the Alberta Act of 1905, albeit illegally. It was not until 1987 when Léo Piquette spoke French in the Legislature that the legal status of the Haultain Resolution was realized (Levasseur-Ouimet, 1991). Of importance, however, is the effect that this resolution had on the education system. It stated that "[a]ll schools shall be taught in the English language" (Aunger, 1989, 216). As such, schools could no longer serve the cultural and linguistic needs of the Francophone people. Instead, schools became the instruments for the majority who were English speakers to assimilate the Francophones.

In response to the Haultain Resolution, Mgr. Grandin protested to the Government of Canada and after four years of writing letters, meeting with federal ministers, and eventually meeting with Sir John A. MacDonald, a concession was granted. In 1896, "the

Ministry of Education authorized instruction in French to Francophones, but limited it to one hour per day" (Martel, 1991, p.95). This, in essence, was the establishment of what became known as the "primary course." Soon thereafter immigrants from the United States of America, Ontario, and Europe changed the linguistic make-up of the Territories (Motut, n.d.). With the arrival of many immigrants from non-English speaking countries, concessions were further granted in 1901 to the "teaching of any language other than English...outside regular school hours" (Martel, 1991 p.95).

Alberta

In 1905, Alberta was carved out of the Northwest Territories and given provincial status. In proclaiming the Alberta Act,

> the School Ordinance, 1901, a statute under the Northwest Territories Act of 1875, was established as the basis for the governance of education in Alberta. This Ordinance, with periodic amendments, continued in effect until 1922 when the first School Act was passed (Government of Alberta, 1984, p.1).

Accordingly, no concessions were made to increase the time permitted for language instruction until 1925. At this time, French was permitted to be used as the language of instruction for francophone students in grades one and two (Martel, 1991). The next concession came in 1964, when the legislation governing francophone schooling was amended to permit the use of French through to grade nine. However, text books used for the instruction of all courses other than French, had to be in English.

By the 1960s the Canadian context was undergoing change. In Québec, "la révolution tranquille" was emerging as Québecers were coming out of the suppression of the Duplessis years. This represented a time when Québecers were also beginning to demand more power at the federal level as well as more autonomy over language and cultural issues. On the international scene, Québec was selected to host the World's Fair more commonly referred to as Expo '67, and on the national scene, Laurendeau and Dunton, who led the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, presented their second report to the Government of Canada in 1968 (Dickinson & Mackay, 1989). Having determined that the content of the report was too important to be ignored, the federal government responded by proclaiming Canada to be officially bilingual. This was achieved with the passing of the Official Languages Act in February of 1969.

In Alberta, meanwhile, the provincial government amended the prevailing legislation in place to increase the time francophone students were permitted to have French as the language of instruction to 50% in grades three to 12 (Aunger, 1989). At this time, however, interest was growing in the French immersion experiment being conducted in Saint Lambert, Québec. Not only were the Francophones interested, but more importantly, so were the Anglophones. Many of these individuals perceived that being fluently bilingual was becoming more and more necessary, especially if one aspired to the federal public service for employment. In addition to this sudden interest in the learning of French, many ethnic groups began to press for similar recognition. Accordingly, the School Act was amended in 1974 to give equal status to all languages and to extend the possibility for all language groups to offer instruction in the target language for up to 50% of the time through to grade 12. Hence, this was the genesis for what became known in Alberta as bilingual programs.

As a result of the success of the immersion experiment at Saint Lambert, Québec, the immersion phenomenon spread quickly across the country. In Alberta, this meant further amending the regulations of the School Act to permit instruction in French for up to 80% of the time. Heritage languages were permitted to offer instruction in the target language for up to 50% of instructional time. This was done in 1976 (Aunger, 1989, p.217). Growth in these programs was phenomenal with often the major limiting factor being the availability of teachers (Slevinsky, 1990). The most popular of these was French immersion. At the height of enrollment, in the 1994-95 school year, 28,802 students were enrolled in this program in Alberta (Alberta Education, 1997). The disturbing side to this success story was the negative effect this program was having on French minority language education.

Initially, many children of section 23 parents enrolled their children in French immersion programs alongside anglophone children. For those children who entered the program with no knowledge of the French language, the results were rapid second language growth. However, for those children who were already proficient in the language, it became evident that this was a situation where the anglophone child would benefit at the expense of the francophone child (Canadian Parents for French & Association Canadienne-Française de l'Alberta, 1986). Accordingly, some francophone parents began pressing for a French as a First Language program and a program developed at the provincial level became available in 1980 (Canadian Parents for French & Association Canadienne-Française de l'Alberta). However, introducing francophone programs where immersion programs had already been implemented was another issue. Because of a lack of

understanding as to both the nature and intended clientele of these two distinct programs, the conflicts which arose in separating the French immersion and the francophone clienteles often resulted in ripping communities apart as well as tarnishing the reputation and integrity of both programs.

The issue of minority language rights which was being discussed across the country, was also a topic for the First Ministers at the Saint Andrews Conference held in 1977. As one of many meetings which were held to set the agenda for the constitutional amendments of 1982, the outcome of this conference was such that "the first ministers agreed to make all necessary efforts to provide instruction in the language of the minority wherever numbers warranted" (Dickinson & Mackay, 1989). This intention went on to serve as the basis for section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms passed by the Federal Government in 1982 (Dickinson & Mackay).

In Alberta, the provincial government quickly responded by introducing Regulation 490-82 which "required all school boards who wished to deliver instruction in French to submit a resolution to that effect to the Minister of Education. They were also required to teach English an [established] minimum number of minutes per week" (Martel, 1991, p.95). Although this seemed quite reasonable, the reality of trying to regroup for instruction according to language became most challenging. Often, it meant redistributing both students and resources to implement yet another French program. Although in many communities the numbers were sufficient to establish French minority language programs and in many cases schools, the way the boundaries were established often meant negotiating with many jurisdictions who were unwilling to cooperate for fear of losing students. In the end, the way education was organized in Alberta fostered neither the establishment of French minority language programs nor schools. Whenever the francophone community appealed to the Department of Education for assistance, the Minister replied that provisions had been made and that it was up to the local authorities to decide (Desjarlais, 1989). Given that the political power held by the francophone minority in the various school jurisdictions of the day was insufficient to influence decision making, this group remained victim to the political will of the majority.

In spite of the difficulties presented, the francophone community continued to press for the rights accorded to them in section 23 of the Charter. In terms of minority language programs, several jurisdictions established these to respond to the francophone community's needs. In terms of schools, there was a similar response. In 1983, the "first French-language school in Alberta based on section 23 eligibility criteria (École-Georges-

et-Julia-Bugnet) [was established]" (Martel, 1991, p.95). Because this school was opened as a private school and did not receive provincial support, a lack of funding forced it to close after one year of operation. The following year, however, two schools were opened: École Maurice-Lavallée, under the auspices of the Edmonton Catholic School Board in Edmonton, and École Saint Antoine, under the auspices of the Calgary Catholic School Board.

Although two francophone schools were operating in Alberta just two years after the passing of the Charter, the francophone community did not believe that it was enjoying the full rights intended by section 23. In particular, it was believed that the clause

> ...to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province (a) applies wherever in the province the number of children of citizens who have such a right is sufficient to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction; and (b) includes, where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Constitution Act 1982 in Direction des Droits de la personne du ministère du multiculturalisme et de la Citoyenneté, 1991),

was not being justly interpreted by the local governments (Bastarache, n.d.). In response, Jean-Claude Mahé, Angéline Martel, Paul Dubé, and L'Association de l'École-Georges-et-Julia-Bugnet brought the case before the courts and were eventually heard by three courts: the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta, the Court of Appeal of Alberta, and the Supreme Court of Canada.

In the first decision handed down by the Court of Queen's Bench in 1985, also referred to as the Purvis Judgment, the Court ruled that indeed "Francophones have a right to 'a degree of exclusive management of their education'" (Martel, 1991, p.96). However, having experienced a degree of management of their schools in the past, the community did not have faith "on the willingness of the majority to provide them with French language instruction and facilities" (Bastarache, n.d. p.38). In addition, the difficulties encountered by the rural francophone communities further convinced Francophones that a partnership was not acceptable. Accordingly, the plaintiffs appealed the decision.

In the Kerans Judgment of 1987, the Court of Appeal of Alberta acknowledged the fact that a joint management model as suggested in the Purvis Judgment was not acceptable. In spite of this, the judgment essentially had a similar outcome because Mr. Justice Kerans went on to say that in his estimation, "the number of pupils in Edmonton is deemed insufficient for establishing a school management system parallel to the majority system" (Martel, 1991, p.96). However, the plaintiffs and the francophone community believed otherwise. The community commissioned a study which found that according to the 1981 census, there were 24,700 Francophones in the Edmonton region and of these, 5,222 were 19 years of age or under (Desjarlais, 1989). In addition to these data, the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta had commissioned a number of studies to examine very closely the numbers in the various communities. These studies consistently found that in their opinion, the numbers were sufficient to warrant the establishment of autonomous francophone schools but further, that if these were not established soon, the rate of assimilation would take a further toll on the population (Desjarlais). So, armed with further arguments and data, the plaintiffs appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Other events were happening in the French language arena at the same time that the Court of Appeal was hearing the case for the management of francophone schools. Léo Piquette, member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta representing the Athabasca-Lac La Biche riding, attempted to speak French in the Legislature. He was denied this right even though the 1892 amendments to the Northwest Territories Act were not valid as they had not had a third reading. This meant that section 110 of this Act, permitting the use of both French and English in the territorial legislature, was still in effect. This was later confirmed to be the case by the Supreme Court of Canada on February 25, 1988 in the Mercure Case. In this case, Fr. Mercure appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada to have a trial for a minor traffic violation heard in French. Although denied this right in the provincial courts of Saskatchewan, a Supreme Court of Canada judgment established that French was indeed a recognized language which could be used in provincial matters in both Alberta and Saskatchewan. However, the judgment also made it clear that the provincial legislatures could amend their laws to effectively make English the only official language recognized should they so wish (Levasseur-Ouimet, 1991). And so, Alberta achieved its unilingual status in response to this by passing the Languages Act in 1988.

Later during this year, Alberta also adopted the "Language Education Policy for Alberta." The purpose of this policy was to underline that Alberta is first and foremost a province where English is the official language and secondly, that Alberta values its

multicultural make-up. In addition to this, the policy also reiterated to the francophone community the definition of the term "school" as defined in the 1988 School Act.

> In this Act, "school" means a structured learning environment through which an education program is offered to a student by a board, an operator of a private school, an early childhood services program private operator, a parent giving a home education program, or the Minister (Government of Alberta, 1988).

With this new definition of "school" which did not necessarily imply a building per se and the accompanying administrative structure, it would become much easier for the province to comply should the Supreme Court of Canada rule in favor of the Francophones.

The Piquette incident, the Mercure Judgment, the Language Policy for Alberta, and the new School Act, in the end, all served to unify the francophone community. Paradoxically, not only did these events serve to motivate the more active members of the francophone community, they appealed to the emotions of the "sleeping majority" of Francophones. The result was that the francophone minority in Alberta became stronger and even more united and motivated to assert itself to fight for its survival.

In 1989, the Supreme Court of Canada heard the Mahé v. Alberta case and was specifically requested to provide its "opinion on the 'where numbers warrant' question, the nature and scope of school management control, the compatibility of language and denominational rights and the obligation of the Alberta government to entrench rights in provincial legislation" (Martel, 1991, p.96). The Supreme Court handed down its decision in March of 1990 referred to as the Dickson Judgment. The Report of the French Language Working Group (1991) summarizes this judgment in the following way.

> 1. The purpose of section 23 is to preserve and enhance the French language and culture and to reduce the rate of assimilation. Its purpose is to "correct, on a national scale, the progressive erosion of minority official language groups and to give effect to the concept of the 'equal partnership' of the two official language groups in the context of education." The judgment stated: "Rightly or wrongly - and it is not for the courts to decide - the framers of the Constitution manifestly regarded as inadequate some - and perhaps all - of the regimes in force at the time the Charter was enacted, and their intention was to remedy the perceived defects of these regimes by uniform corrective measures, namely those contained in s. 23 of the

Charter, which were at the same time given the status of a constitutional guarantee."

2. Protection of the rights of the minority cannot be left in the hands of the majority.

3. Section 23 parents have a right to choose to have their children educated either in English or in French.

4. In determining whether numbers warrant either programs or schools, a sliding scale must be considered. The Court also said that in determining the number it was important to consider not only the number of section 23 parents who want a program or school (the known demand), but also the number who potentially might access the program or school.

5. Section 23 parents have a right to a certain degree of management and control of French schools. A sliding scale measure is to be considered, with French school boards at the top of the scale (p.5).

In response to this decision, the Alberta Minister of Education created "The French Language Working Group" in 1991. "Its mandate [was] to establish the modalities for the implementation of a management model for Francophone schools in the province" (Tardif, 1993, p.6). After consulting with key stakeholders in the francophone communities, the preferred option proposed by this group was to divide the province into seven geographic regions for the purposes of managing francophone schooling (Alberta Education, 1994). However, before the recommendations of this group could be implemented, the province announced sweeping reforms to education in 1994 resulting in the creation of seven Francophone Education Regional Authorities. Three of these authorities established school boards for the purpose of operating those previously established francophone schools and they established additional facilities to continue to meet the needs of the minority population. These three jurisdictions are the Conseil scolaire régional du Nord-Ouest N° 1 which assumes responsibility for the one school serving the Smoky and Peace River region, the Conseil scolaire de l'école nouvelle N° 2 which has responsibility for four schools serving the Plamondon, Saint Paul, Bonnyville, and Cold Lake region, and the Conseil scolaire régional du Centre-Nord N° 4 which is responsible for the seven schools serving the greater Edmonton region. In addition, the Conseil scolaire régional du Centre-Nord N° 4 provides administrative services for the two francophone schools, one

established in the Lethbridge region and another in the Red Deer region. It is these three autonomous jurisdictions that are the focus of this study.

Reflections

Although the francophone community was eventually successful in establishing its own autonomous schools, the survival of these schools and more importantly, the community, is still precarious. In the first instance, the community recognizes and acknowledges that the source of power protecting minority rights in this country lies not at the municipal or provincial levels of government, but rather at the federal level. Historically, the Department of the Secretary of State (Heritage Canada), the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Federal Department of Justice including the Supreme Court of Canada, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and other federal institutions have maintained and supported the efforts of the francophone minority in preserving both its language and its culture. However, with the constant uncertainty in the political arena as a result of the unfinished constitutional debate, both the short and the long term survival of the francophone community outside Québec remain a challenge.

In addition to the political nature of the issue of minority rights, there is the issue of assimilation. The media, the language of business, and the language of municipal and provincial governments are but some of the major forces which contribute to the assimilation of Francophones living in a minority situation. Although many of the forces contributing to this phenomenon are external, some of the contributing factors come from within the community as well. Selecting a school, the language used in the home, personal reading materials, a place of worship, and choice of media are examples of the choices Francophones make in their daily lives. In a minority situation, Francophones are always presented with the temptation to choose services offered in English, the dominant language of our society.

Purpose of the Study

After having invested many years of hard work and lobbying, the francophone community has won its right to provide educational services in French as intended in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Since 1994, 14 autonomous francophone schools have been established in Alberta and work continues to expand the educational services available for the children of those parents who have rights under section 23 of the Charter. Given that the francophone community in Alberta was the first to present its case before the Supreme Court of Canada and further that structures which comply to the intent

of section 23 have been in place for three years, it becomes important to examine the current state of francophone schooling. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to determine the current issues facing key decision makers of these francophone schools and to examine, in part, how these issues are being addressed.

Statement of the Problem and Sub-problems

In order to address this purpose, the following major question is posed: "What are the current issues facing Alberta's recently established autonomous school jurisdictions?" To examine this problem, the following aspects were deemed to be important:

1. To provide a context for this study by providing an historical overview of French language schooling in Alberta from 1842 to the present. As this study was undertaken, however, the focus was shifted to include the specific steps in the developmental process as well as to put a greater emphasis on the issues than on the means of addressing these issues.

2. To describe the context in which issues are addressed. This includes a brief overview of legal events which led to the establishment of autonomous francophone school jurisdictions, a description of the context in which these jurisdictions are set, a description of the structures which facilitate addressing the identified issues, and an overview of how these structures came to being.

Hence, the specific questions addressed by this study are as follows:

1. How were these autonomous francophone school jurisdictions established?

2. What are the current issues facing Alberta's newly established francophone school jurisdictions.

3. How are these issues determined?

4. Once a major issue has been determined, how is it addressed?

5. What are the implications of the establishment of these francophone jurisdictions for the francophone community in Alberta, other provinces and territories, and also for other language groups?

Definitions

The following definitions of terms is provided to assist readers in their interpretation of the study:

Autonomous francophone school: A school providing educational services by one of the three Francophone Education Regional Authorities operating schools.

Coordinating Council: One of three Councils established by the Minister of Education established to work with the local school jurisdictions and the francophone community to provide educational services to the children of those parents who have rights according to section 23 of the Charter.

Eligible student: A student who, because of the rights granted to his or her parents in section 23 of the Charter, is eligible to attend a French minority language school operated by one of the three autonomous francophone school jurisdictions or a French minority language school operated by a public or separate board in collaboration with the local Coordinating Council. As such, an eligible student is not necessarily a Francophone.

Francophone: An individual whose first language learned and still understood is French.

Francophone community: A group of individuals who share a common interest in preserving and developing the French language and culture in the context of the larger anglophone community. As such, individuals within this community are united by a common social project which has as its goal ensuring the survival of tomorrow's community.

Francophone Education Regional Authority: One of seven such Authorities established in 1994 which has the responsibility to provide educational services to the children of those parents who have rights according to section 23 of the Charter. To date, three of these Authorities are operating schools, three are served by a Coordinating Council, and one remains dormant.

Francophone school jurisdiction: One of the three autonomous school jurisdictions in Alberta created in 1994 which is currently operating at least one autonomous francophone school.

Section 23 parent: A parent who, according to section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, has the right to have his or her children educated in a minority language institution.

Significance of the Study

The Official Languages Act passed in 1969 and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms passed in 1982 accorded the official language minority group in Canada's provinces and territories the legislation which was required to press that provincial or territorial government into providing an equitable education to the official language minority in the jurisdiction in question. In Alberta, this legislation was intended to support the efforts of the francophone minority.

In the 1970s, the francophone community in Alberta realized that the recently implemented French immersion and bilingual programs did not meet the needs of its students. In fact, these programs had been conceived for the majority language group to learn the second official language of the jurisdiction. For Alberta, this meant that these French language programs were intended for children from non-French speaking families. Although many francophone parents welcomed these programs as they were believed to be much better that the traditional French as a Second Language classes, some families realized that these programs did not meet the linguistic and cultural needs of their children. These parents soon thereafter organized their efforts and pressed to establish an equitable education for the francophone minority in Alberta. Although the community initially directed its efforts at the local school jurisdictions, the francophone community eventually had to proceed through the courts. After more than a decade and having gone through the Court of Queen's Bench, the Court of Appeal and finally onto the Supreme Court of Canada, the francophone community won its case "granting it not only the right to establishing their own schools, but the right to manage and control these" (Mahé v. Alberta). Although this ruling, also referred to as the Dickson Judgment, represented a major victory for the francophone minority community in Alberta, it sent a message across the country to all jurisdictions with respect to minority language schooling and set the stage for the establishment of autonomous minority language schools.

Now that autonomous francophone jurisdictions have been established in Alberta, it becomes important to examine how these organizations have established themselves and are managing on a daily basis. Given that three autonomous school jurisdictions have been established to date, the findings of this study may be significant for the four remaining

Authorities looking to establish a Board and to begin operating their own schools. This study may also be of interest to the francophone community in other parts of Canada wishing to establish a similar model of autonomous francophone schooling. As well, this study may be of interest to other language groups, including Canada's aboriginal communities, looking to establish their own autonomous schools.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Research Design

Qualitative research is premised on a set of assumptions. The first of these assumptions is that "reality is socially constructed" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.7). As such, it is incumbent upon the researcher to come "to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.6). A second assumption qualitative researchers hold is the notion that the many variables which make up reality are "complex, interwoven, and difficult to measure" (Glesne & Peshkin, p.7). One of the tasks this researcher has before him, therefore, is to "uncover some of that complexity" (Glesne & Peshkin, p.7). A third assumption inherent in this research paradigm is that the researcher purposely sets out to get an understanding of the phenomenon being studied from the participants' vantage point. As such, the role of the researcher in naturalistic inquiry has "to be made from the position of the actor. One would have to see the operating situation as the actor sees it. You have to define and interpret the objects as the actor interprets them" (Blumer, 1969, p.542). In light of this, the researcher may also have to "use multiple means to gather data" (Glesne & Peshkin, p.7). The fourth assumption inherent in qualitative research is that the focus is on the subject matter rather than on the research method itself. Conducting research within this paradigm gives primary importance to the subject as opposed to the method and as such, the researcher must be flexible and open given the emergent nature of findings.

Based on my acceptance of these assumptions and the plurality of understandings surrounding francophone education, this study was conducted within an interpretive perspective. As such, I expect that all information, whether gathered through documents or interviews, reflects the particular understandings or world views of the authors and participants. I accept that such views are infused with the values orientation of the writers and interviewees and that my own presence is not invisible. I too will bring my orientation to the work. The focus of interpretive research is to foster understanding and insight based on readings of the views of those involved in the situation. Therefore, interpretive studies provide "thick" description to aid readers in their own assessment of the transferability of the findings. While the major focus of my research question is on current issues in francophone education in Alberta, my understandings of situations are embedded in the larger context of francophone education in a minority setting.

Method

For this study, I began by doing an analysis of the documents relating to the establishment of autonomous francophone schools. Such documents as the "Policy Handbook" of participating school jurisdictions, the "Alberta School Act" and the "Regulations" governing francophone schooling, and the Alberta government's "Francophone Governance Implementation Handbook," historical documents, and many reports written for the francophone community were analyzed with the view to getting a better understanding of the process used to establish these autonomous francophone school jurisdictions. In addition to this, I attended a series of meetings at the jurisdiction level as well as at the school level to get a better understanding of the formal structures and protocols which were used by decision makers to identify, discuss, and address current issues.

Once I gained an understanding of the legal framework and context in which these autonomous francophone school jurisdictions were established, I used both document analysis and personal interviews to conduct the research. Allen and Montell (1981), Hitch and Norris (1988), Hodysh and McIntosh (1989), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Tosh (1984) all agree that document analysis and the interview are potentially reliable and effective methods of gathering data.

Document Analysis

Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Allen and Montell (1981), Schwant (1994), Tosh (1984) and others recognize the use of historical documents as legitimate data sources. The challenge the researcher faces when using these sources is to recognize potential bias. Tosh identifies two sources of this bias. The first source of bias he identifies is inherent in the social class to which the writer of the document belongs or belonged. He argues that all writers of history belong to a particular social class and that more often than not, history is written by those belonging to the ruling class. Another potential source of bias is the reflection of the researcher's perspective. Carr (1961), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Tosh make the argument that as individuals, we all bring a unique perspective to any given issue or event and that the position in time into which we are born also contributes largely to the perspective and understandings we bring.

Document analysis in this study involved the examination of both historical and legal documents and interpretations which relate to francophone schooling as well as the examination of "Board Meeting Minutes" and "Policy Handbooks" developed since 1994.

These documents were examined to allow me as a researcher to get an insider's view of how these autonomous francophone school jurisdictions were established as well as to permit me to get an overview of the issues educational leaders were faced with over time. In addition, carrying out a document analysis also allowed me to explore the underlying orientation of the writers as reflected in the documents.

Interviews

According to Allen & Montell (1981), Hitch & Norris (1988), Hodysh & McIntosh (1989), Lincoln & Guba (1985), and Tosh (1984), interviews are potentially a good source of data therefore I used this method to gather data additional to those provided by document analysis. The interviews were semi-structured. Although I used an interview guide (see Appendix B), additional topics identified during the document search and by the participants themselves were probed further. The purpose of these interviews was to identify the issues, to explore pertinent background information which led to the identification of each of the issues identified, to gain an understanding of how the issues relate to the context, and to gain an understanding of the possible and plausible implications of how some of these issues are addressed in Alberta's francophone school jurisdictions.

To gather data in this way, it was important to first establish trust with the participants. Once I felt I had established this trust, I then proceeded to explore the issues with the participants and asked them to provide stories and examples to illustrate or clarify meanings held. In this way, the meanings shared were ground in the information provided.

As a researcher, I was not invisible. I knew many of the participants in this study. As both a teacher in one of the francophone school districts and a member of the francophone community, I knew the participants either as colleagues or as members of the same community. This aided in the establishment of trust and because of this, I was able to encourage participants to share divergent views from what they may have considered to be my own position.

Pilot Study

Once the interview guide was prepared, a potential respondent was selected for an interview. Interviewing this participant allowed me as a researcher to gain comfort with the process as well as to gather some data. Once the interview was completed, the data were transcribed and analyzed for content. This analysis allowed me to determine the appropriateness of the questions as well as provided me with an opportunity to discuss the

process and the result of the analysis with the interviewee. Once completed, the interview guide and the interview process were modified to address those concerns identified.

Participants and Data Gathering

For this study, participants were selected from those stakeholder groups which directly and indirectly influence policy development in Alberta's recently established francophone school jurisdictions. Potential groups included the seven Francophone Education Regional Authorities, the provincial government of Alberta, and the federal government. Of the nine potential stakeholder groups, six were selected to participate. I interviewed 12 key individuals who hold leadership positions and as such have a direct involvement with current issues in francophone schooling from the six stakeholder groups selected.

To select the individuals, I contacted key stakeholders in francophone education and asked them to provide me with a list of individuals whom they considered to be influential in setting the direction for policy development at the jurisdiction level in francophone schooling. Key stakeholders for identification of study participants included board chairmen, trustees, appointed members from Coordinating Councils, superintendents, secretary treasurers, government officials working in the area, and school principals. Once all of the names were forwarded, I selected 12 participants from those whose names appeared more frequently from the lists submitted. Those selected included two board chairmen, one trustee, one member from a Coordinating Council, two superintendents, one secretary treasurer, one principal, and four government officials. Once identified, I interviewed each of the participants with the view to exploring the three broad interview questions. These were: (1) What are the current issues facing the newly established francophone school jurisdictions? (2) How were these determined? and (3) How are these being addressed?

After a first round of interviews, the data provided were transcribed and returned to participants for confirmation. Participants had the opportunity to make any changes, additions and deletions. Once completed, I had many subsequent conversations with participants to clarify the data and to probe further the many issues or areas which emerged from the initial round of data collection. These additional interviews yielded deeper insights into the area of study. By interviewing key individuals acting in the positions identified, a wide range of issues were raised as well as insights into the process of policy development itself.

Data Analysis

In addition to the interviews, I kept a field journal which not only included documentation of specific actions, but also personal reflections and preliminary analyses since data analysis was ongoing throughout the process. Once the initial round of data gathering was completed, each transcript was reviewed, speech units were labelled and based on these titles, the data were first grouped into three sections. The data were further analyzed and organized into the categories and subcategories. Once this was done, the data were further analyzed for possible missing pieces and additional probing questions were raised with individual participants. When this stage of data analysis was completed, the data were further analyzed to identify the emerging themes.

To ensure that the categories and themes which emerged were plausible and supported by the data, a colleague familiar with interpretive research strategies did a verification of categories and themes and discussed the initial findings with me. I then continued to analyze and to write the findings as found in chapter III of this study. When this was completed, I returned the chapter to my colleague for further verification.

Trustworthiness

The initial document analysis provided an understanding of the structures which were in place in the francophone jurisdictions for the purposes of identifying and responding to issues in francophone schooling. The data gathered through this document analysis were further checked against the perceptions and knowledge of the interviewees. In so doing, the data gathered from this document search were cross verified by the documents themselves as well as by the participants to ensure what Stake (1995) and Glesne and Peshkin (1992) refer to as theory triangulation.

With respect to the interviews, these were recorded, transcribed, and returned to the interviewees for confirmation. In this way, the interviewees had the opportunity to add, delete or change the transcript in a way which best reflected their intentions. As such, the data themselves are deemed trustworthy.

Once the data were collected and the analyses was underway, I involved the participants in reviewing study findings. Participants were asked to "examine rough drafts of writing where the actions or words of the actor are featured" (Stake, 1995, p.115). This, in research, is commonly referred to as member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition to this, my colleague confirmed the categories and was asked to critically read the

draft of the study findings. According to Lincoln and Guba, the purpose of getting a colleague to critically read initial findings is to test the credibility of the study findings.

In addition to the procedures outlined above, I kept an accurate record of the steps undertaken to carry out this study as well as kept a copy of all the data used to generate the study findings. Should the need arise, an audit of the research is possible.

Validity

The term "validity" can refer to both the data themselves or the study findings. In the case of the data, the term "internal validity" is used whereas for the study findings, the term "transferability" is used.

Internal validity refers to the trustworthiness of the data themselves. For this study, the data used came from the following sources: school jurisdiction, government, and other documents relating to francophone schooling and participant interviews. In the case of the documents, an extensive search of the available documents was done. This included policy handbooks, minutes of board meetings, and government and other documents which related to francophone schooling. Many of these documents were historical in nature. Given the importance of board policies, records of and reference to these were present in many of the documents examined. Accordingly, the data generated by this document search provided me with an opportunity to compare the data for their consistency. In the case of inconsistencies, additional data sources were consulted. These data sources included both additional government and historical documents as well as the recollections of research participants and other witnesses.

In the case of the interviews, participants had the opportunity to verify their intentions by confirming the data in the transcripts. As well, I had the opportunity to ask the participants to clarify these intentions as well as to provide additional data. In this way, both the participant and the researcher had the opportunity to establish data which reflected the participants' truths as closely as possible and therefore can be deemed credible.

In the case of this study, each francophone community in Alberta has its own unique reality and social make-up, economic base, and history. Accordingly, there is no expectation that the findings will be generalizable to francophone school jurisdictions in other provinces and territories or other autonomous school jurisdictions. However, a sufficient description of the context is provided so that readers can decide for themselves how and to what extent study findings can be transferred to their own settings.

Reliability

The concept of reliability embodies the notion of replicability. In naturalistic inquiry, the data are often reconstructions of social phenomena relayed to the researcher by participants who themselves have as individuals their own understandings of these phenomena to offer. In addition to this, I, as the researcher, am not free of bias. Consistant with what Guba & Lincoln (1994) maintain, I, too, bring my own understandings of the research question to the study. As such, because of the interplay of these individual perspectives and the evolving nature of these perspectives over time, the ability to replicate studies of this nature may not be possible (Schwandt, 1994). The focus in interpretive research is on being able to contribute a set of truths grounded in the available data.

Multiple Understandings

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the truths we hold emerge in part from the constructions that our language, previous experiences, and knowledge and values base permit us to construct at a given point in time. As I researched the development of policy in these newly established autonomous school jurisdictions, I recognized that the written documentation surrounding this issue perhaps reflected the specific needs of a particular francophone community. The government documents researched as well may have reflected or reflect the specific needs of the overall government policy.

In terms of the interviewees, this same phenomenon exists. Because each participant holds a unique set of knowledge and experiences, this in turn gave rise to that individual's unique understandings of a particular issue. Schwandt (1994) brings to our attention that for any given issue, there exists the potential for many different and even conflicting perspectives. He further points out that oftentimes, no one perspective is necessarily more superior than another and that all of the individual constructions presented may be equally as legitimate and meaningful. The implication for the researcher, then, is to accept the notion that in addressing the research questions, participants will contribute from their particular understandings and that the result may be the emergence of multiple truths.

Assumptions

There are two major assumptions underlying this study. The first of these is that the data provided by the participants are trustworthy and as such, are accurate reflections of the meanings held with respect to the questions posed. The second assumption underlying this

study is that the proposed method for data gathering and data analysis yielded trustworthy study findings.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to the seven recently created autonomous Francophone Education Regional Authorities and the provincial and federal government departments which have an influence in policy development in the area of francophone schooling. Data gathered came from participants within these Francophone Education Regional Authorities serving the francophone communities as well as senior government officials who exercise some influence in the development of board policies. This study is also delimited to the meanings held by participants during the time period that the interviews and subsequent follow-up conversations were held. As such, the current issues identified in this study were those deemed important to the participants from February 1997 to June 1997.

Limitations

This study has potentially three limitations. The first of these is that the participants selected to participate in this study may not have included the best sources of data available, and second that given the size of the francophone community in Alberta, it was necessary at times to remove or suppress information which would have identified particular people and broken the ethical agreement under which the study was completed. The third limitation is researcher bias. As researcher and member of the francophone community, I realize that I am not invisible and accordingly my own personal views may, in some unintentional way, contribute to this study's limitations.

Ethical Considerations

The francophone community in Alberta is rather small in number and its membership is very strongly linked together. In addition, not all of the seven Francophone Education Regional Authorities are operating schools. Accordingly, given that a descriptive context for an interpretive study is essential, it is not be possible to maintain the anonymity of the jurisdictions being studied. However, I tried to include only those features which are essential to an understanding of the issues, and where necessary, made changes to protect the anonymity of the participants. I recognize that once the different settings become discernible, the participants are likely to have their identities revealed. In light of this, particular care was taken to ensure anonymity to minimize the chances of participant disclosure.

Another issue is that of confidentiality. Given that I knew many of the participants and that some of the issues discussed may have been sensitive issues in the various communities, it is possible that some participants may not have felt comfortable discussing certain issues which may refer to others known to us both. In any event, I did all that is possible to guarantee anonymity to the participants as well as guarantee confidentiality. In addition to this, participants were free to opt out of the study at any time and were reminded of this at several intervals.

CHAPTER III

STUDY FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to report study findings in relation to the current issues identified in Alberta's francophone school jurisdictions. Although in some instances documents, reviews, and observations were accessed to provide additional data, the main purpose of this chapter is to present the understandings held by the 12 participants. As such, this chapter provides readers with an opportunity to draw their own conclusions with respect to the meanings and the understandings that these 12 participants brought to the task of determining current issues and addressing these in the area of minority language education in Alberta's newly established francophone school jurisdictions.

Once the data were gathered, I labelled each speech unit and, based on these, organized them into sections to facilitate the task of reporting study findings. The data were reported in three general sections. The first section presents the participants' understandings of the structures which were in place and which emerged to realize the establishment of Alberta's francophone jurisdictions. Although this was not an interview question per se, participants all chose to relate how their jurisdiction had developed in order to place the current issues in context. The second section provides an overview of the current issues senior administrators identified in their day to day task of determining and setting policy in these newly established francophone school jurisdictions. The third section is more reflective in nature and groups participants assessment of francophone schooling today and future prospects in the area of minority language education.

The Structures

This section presents an overview of the structures which were in place and which emerged to permit the establishment and ongoing development of autonomous francophone school jurisdictions in Alberta as understood by the study participants. These include the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Dickson Judgment, the School Acts, the many organizations serving the francophone community, and those government departments directly involved in the area of francophone schooling. The description provided represents the participants'understandings of the structures. Although these understandings were further confirmed through document analysis, the brief descriptions provided here may not represent a complete image of these various structures.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Of all the structures mentioned, the one which was most often referred to by participants was the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Participants were unanimous in viewing Canada as a bilingual country and further, that section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provided a constitutional right to members of the official language minority to access schooling in that province provided to them out of public funds. In Alberta, this was interpreted to mean that Francophones have the status of being the official language minority and that section 23 of the Charter applied to them. One participant expressed this view in these terms.

> So, from our perspective, we have always clearly said that since we've got the official languages in the land, there are certain rights that come out of that legislation. And then, when the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was put into place, section 23 dealt with these francophone rights to schools.

However, as one participant observed, adopting the Charter may have provided the structure required for addressing the issues surrounding the establishment of minority language schools, but

> c'est l'interprétation de ces droits qu'il fallait savoir et avoir une interprétation de La Cour avant qu'on puisse mettre en place les droits de gestion. Et alors, avec l'arrêt Mahé et ensuite le renvoi du Manitoba, les règles ont été établies pour l'existence de la gérance et aussi le niveau de gérance auquel les Francophones auraient droit.

Determining the degree to which the francophone minority was entitled to manage and control its own schools was eventually determined by the courts. However, the community did not sit back and await the interpretation of the judicial system. It organized itself and pressed on ahead.

Local Communities Respond to the Charter

The different local communities had their own interpretation of the intention of section 23 of the Charter. Armed with the Charter and a deep sense of commitment to establishing their own schools, several communities asserted themselves and took action.

The following description of events represents a summary of those stories shared by the 12 participants.

Calgary Responds

The Roman Catholic Church and La Société franco-canadienne which eventually became the local chapter of L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta were the two institutions which united the francophone community in the Calgary area during 1982, the year the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was adopted. While assembled together either at the local Roman Catholic Church or at activities organized by La Société franco-canadienne, members of the sparsely populated francophone community began expressing concerns about the nature of French language programs offered by the Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District # 1. In response to their concerns, the community approached the Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Board for the establishment of a homogenous francophone school. The Board cooperated and the community opened École Saint Antoine, its first homogenous francophone school, in 1984. The following year, the program was transferred to one of its subsequent sites, at École Sainte Anne.

Edmonton Responds

Soon after the passing of the Charter, a small group of Francophones aware of their constitutional rights and of the fact that the French immersion program was not meeting the needs of their children, organized and met officials at Alberta Education and requested assistance to establish a francophone school. Given the current School Act then in force, this group, commonly referred to as L'Association de l'École Georges et Julia Bugnet, was advised to approach either the public or the separate school jurisdiction responsible for operating schools in the city. They did approach the Edmonton Public School Board and their request was denied. Following this refusal, the group went on to establish a private school which operated during the 1983-84 school year. However, because of a lack of funding and a lack of enrollment, they were forced to cease operating.

The establishment of this school did serve to initiate some discussion in the community with respect to establishing homogenous francophone schools. During the 1983-84 school year, La Société des parents pour une éducation française in Edmonton began to question whether the French immersion program was indeed meeting the needs of its children. Before long, this group was leading the community in asking the Edmonton Catholic Separate School Board to establish a homogenous francophone school. Although

choosing a location became quite an issue, the Board did cooperate and opened École Maurice-Lavallée in September of 1984.

During this first year, the school offered a homogenous francophone program from kindergarten through grade six. The secondary program, made up of grades seven and eight, housed both francophone and French immersion students. However, before long, the francophone community pressed for the establishment of a homogenous francophone school from kindergarten through grade 12 which it eventually achieved in September of 1987. It was in the implementation of the secondary level that initiated much discussion both in the francophone and the French immersion communities. After much debate, a homogenous francophone program was established at École Maurice-Lavallée and a secondary French immersion program was established at École J. H. Picard.

Saint Isidore Responds

The situation in the Peace River region of the province was perhaps the most contentious one given the elements at play. In historical terms, the Peace River region was settled in large part by Francophones. Even today, many of these small rural centres are regarded as being francophone communities. However, the structures governing the delivery of education in these communities did not favour the establishment of autonomous homogenous schools for the francophone population. Soon after the passing of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the community of Falher undertook one of the most colourful debates in its history.

The school in Falher provided an educational service to a clientele which was, as one participant claimed, 98.5% francophone. Students attending the school could choose either an English program or a French program. Within each of these programs, however, there were students from both the English and the francophone communities. One participant noted that senior officials in the area, including a school superintendent, thought highly of the current arrangement because it afforded his non-francophone children an excellent opportunity to learn and to be educated in the French language. However, some members within the community were not satisfied with the programs being offered and saw these as vehicles toward linguistic and cultural assimilation. Accordingly, soon after the passing of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, they started to press for an autonomous homogenous francophone school which, in their view, would serve to protect the francophone community from further assimilation and allow them to exercise the rights

provided to them under the Charter. Given the mechanism for funding as provided in the School Act, this was no easy task.

Of the many issues debated, funding an autonomous homogenous school was perhaps the most crucial. As it was, students were identified as residents of a school jurisdiction according to where they lived and also according to their religious faith. Once residency was determined, provincial funding for those students was directed to their respective school jurisdiction. When the parents in the Peace River area decided to establish their own jurisdiction, Saint Isidore, and their own school at Jean-Côté in 1988, some of the surrounding school jurisdictions were not willing to surrender funding which was directed to them as determined by residency. These boards maintained that they were providing a French program and further, that Saint Isidore was another public board and as such, they were not obliged to redirect funding for students wishing to attend École Héritage at Jean Côté established by the Saint Isidore school jurisdiction. The debate continued over funding and eventually resulted in a directive from the Minister ordering these boards to redirect both provincial and local funding raised for these students to the newly established Saint Isidore school jurisdiction.

Saint Paul Responds

Although the local school jurisdiction had established a francophone program, a group of parents, who was still not convinced that the program offered met the linguistic and cultural needs of their children, began to discuss the possibility of establishing a homogenous francophone school. After a series of meetings, the group formally organized itself as La Société des parents pour une école française à Saint-Paul. The organization approached the local public school jurisdiction, Saint Paul School District #2228, in September of 1985 asking that it establish a homogenous school for francophone children. However, Saint Paul School District #2228 responded by offering to set up an ad hoc committee made up of eight members; four members coming from La Société des parents pour une éducation française à Saint-Paul and the other four coming from the Saint Paul School District #2228.

After a series of meetings, the group made a formal request to the Saint Paul School District # 2228 to establish a kindergarten through grade nine homogenous francophone school. The request was denied. The Board was not convinced that numbers warranted and further, it was concerned about the potential impact that opening a homogenous school might have on the francophone program it was currently offering. Discussions continued

over the next few years and eventually resulted in the Board establishing a homogenous francophone school in September of 1991. During its first year of operation, the school was housed in a separate facility and offered instruction for francophone students from kindergarten through grade six with the extension of an additional year of instruction each year thereafter until the program offered a complete kindergarten through grade 12 program. As such, the first group of students having completed its studies in this homogenous francophone school setting was expected to have graduated in June of 1997.

The Dickson Judgment

Although the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms established certain rights and freedoms in principle, the judicial process had to be used to interpret the intentions of these rights and freedoms. In the case of interpreting section 23 of the Charter as it related to francophone schools, Jean Claude Mahé, Angéline Martel, Paul Dubé and L'Association de l'École Georges et Julia Bugnet brought their case before the courts. Although the case was heard by three courts, participants tended to refer most often to the judgment coming from the Supreme Court of Canada. This event is commonly referred to as the Dickson Judgment, the Bugnet Case or the Mahé Decision.

According to participants, this judgment coming down from the Supreme Court of Canada was of critical importance. The issue that this judgment would finally clear for both the francophone community as well as the majority was that of management and control. As it was, the educational interests of the francophone minority were in the hands of the majority. In the end, this judgment ruled in favour of the appellants, thus providing for the country an interpretation of the intent of section 23. As such, the onus was now placed on the province of Alberta, among others, to modify its legal structure in order to provide the francophone community with the structure required to establish and eventually manage and control its own autonomous homogenous schools.

Responses to the Judgment

It took approximately eight years from the time the Charter was passed to actually get an interpretation from the Supreme Court of Canada on section 23 of the Charter. Given the directives of this important judgment to the province of Alberta, much remained to be done by all stakeholders in education. The first major challenge was to come up with a governing structure which would allow the province to extend to the francophone minority its constitutional right. Given the current structure provided in part by the School Act as

well as the divergent expectations of the francophone and majority communities, a lot of work had to be done in a short time to effectively deal with the issues.

The Franco-Albertan Community

One of the stakeholders to respond at an early stage to the Supreme Court ruling was the community. Through two of its organizations, L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta and La Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta, the community commissioned a study in anticipation that the judgment would rule in favour of the appellants. The purpose of this study was to get a better understanding of the perceptions and expectations in the various francophone communities with respect to implementing a model which would see the francophone minority manage and control its own education. The study is commonly referred to as L'Étude Lamoureux-Tardif and is entitled "Un système d'éducation franco-albertain: Étude sur la gestion et le contrôle de l'enseignement en français en Alberta." The major findings of this study stated very clearly that the franco-albertan community wanted a governing structure which respected local autonomy, religious freedom, equitable funding, and more influence in the area of program development and support services delivered by Alberta Education (Lamoureux & Tardif, 1990).

The Provincial Government Response

The Supreme Court judgment relating to francophone schooling in Alberta was delivered in March of 1990. At this time many other events and discussions, which were both directly and indirectly related, were occurring. At the national level, the country was deeply preoccupied with discussions of constitutional change in what is more commonly referred to as the Meech Lake Accord. Of course, in June of 1990, the country would witness the death of this accord only to be replaced with another round of constitutional talks known as the Charlottetown Accord. In October of 1992, this Accord would see the same fate as the Meech Lake Accord. In addition to all of these constitutional talks going on, the question of national unity was in the forefront because Québec was getting ready for a referendum which it held in October 1995.

At the provincial level, politicians and bureaucrats were following, with great interest, events at the national level. However, there were local issues which required provincial intervention as well. One of these was the situation at Saint Isidore where some of the surrounding school jurisdictions refused to transfer funding for those students choosing a homogenous francophone school offered by this Board. In the short term, the

government could respond to this individual situation. However, given the directives of the Supreme Court judgment, a number of groups and task forces was put together with the view to providing some long term direction for the province on this issue.

The first small task force. Immediately following the Supreme Court ruling referred to as the Dickson Judgment, the provincial government established a task force of three government officials. This group's mandate was twofold. In the first instance, this task force had to settle the more immediate concern relating to funding issues in the Peace River area. The other purpose of this task force was to determine and possibly confirm the community's expectations with respect to the establishment of a governing structure for francophone education as presented in the Lamoureux-Tardif Study.

In fulfilling its mandate, the task force held a series of public consultations in several communities in the Peace River area. In addition to providing information which would lead to settling the more immediate funding concerns, these public consultations provided an opportunity for members of this task force to determine what the major issues in this region were as well as providing key stakeholders with an opportunity to publicly air these issues. In so doing, the process revealed a very divided community and, more importantly, provided a structure for the community and key stakeholders to begin to better understand the complexity of the issues as well as appreciate the multiple understandings held by the various stakeholders.

This first task force concluded its work by presenting its findings to the Minister of Education in November 1990 in a discussion paper entitled "Management and Control of French Education in Alberta." However, given the structure provided by the 1988 School Act as well as the emerging issue of francophone governance on a provincial scale, more work had to be done. To this end, a new structure referred to as the Minister's French Language Working Group was established.

French Language Working Group. This group was established on January 11, 1991 by then Minister of Education, the Honourable Jim Dinning. Its membership was made up of three public members at large, one member from each of Alberta Education, the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents, the Alberta Teachers' Association, L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, the Alberta School Trustees' Association, La Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta, and its chairman, the Honourable Walter Paszkowski, the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Smoky River. This group's official mandate "was to recommend an appropriate management model for

implementing the Supreme Court decision in a way that suits the Alberta context and Alberta communities" (French Language Working Group, 1991, p.1).

To accomplish the task assigned to it, the group met on several occasions to set the agenda and gather information. Information was gathered in several ways. To begin, the group reviewed work which had already been done. This included reviewing a list of documents prepared on the issue including the discussion paper provided by the small task force entitled "Management and Control of French Education in Alberta." In addition, the French Language Working Group held public meetings in several communities where individuals and groups had the opportunity to make oral and or written submissions with respect to the issue of governance as it related to francophone schooling. In all, 60 formal submissions were received from stakeholders to the French Language Working Group. The task of the French Language Working Group was to provide a set of recommendations to the Minister. The recommendations were submitted to the Minister in May of 1991 in a report entitled "Report of the French Language Working Group to the Minister of Education, The Honourable Jim Dinning." The report made a series of recommendations on the issues of management and control of francophone education, the election process, and funding.

As with the process used by the first small task force established by the Minister in 1990, the process used by the French Language Working Group allowed issues to be raised and to be discussed in a very public process. The result was that the process raised the level of consciousness of all stakeholders and, in addition, allowed the provincial government to respond in a way which could satisfy the constitutional requirements of the Charter and the directives of the Supreme Court judgment. The more negative results were such that the process often brought to the surface the deep divisions and tensions that existed within the communities as well as among the communities involved.

Francophone Governance Implementation Committee. Once the French Language Working Group had given its report to him, the challenge for the Minister became one of operationalizing it or as one participant described it, "giving it life." To do this, the Minister struck another committee in July 1992, referred to as the Francophone Governance Implementation Committee. Membership for this committee included three officials from Alberta as well as one member each from La Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Boards Association and L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta. The mandate of this committee was to examine the Report of the French Language Working Group, to examine Bills 41 and 8

which sought changes to the School Act, to understand the proposed governance model, to ensure that stakeholders understood the proposed governance model, to anticipate any questions which might arise, and finally, to establish a communication plan for the government.

The committee met over the course of the following two years with the view to fulfilling its mandate. One of the recurring challenges to the task at hand revolved around the issue of funding. Under provisions of the 1988 School Act which was in force, approximately 40% of the funding provided for a child's education was raised at the municipal level. Accordingly, proposing a model which would allow a parent to choose and at the same time have locally generated funding redirected without creating ill will became central to discussions held. The committee did eventually develop a funding structure which would have seen as one participant expressed it, "the money following the child." In the end, however, the committee's recommendations with respect to funding were eventually subsumed by the sweeping reforms to education brought on by the passing of Bill 8. This Bill was proclaimed on January 13, 1994. It is interesting to note that the changes brought on by Bill 8 were, in part, the direct result of trying to implement a governance model for francophone education. One participant confirmed this view in the following way.

> The work done by our committee led the way for the rest of the changes. The notion of full funding following the child emerged from our work because as it was, the proposed Francophone Education Regional Authorities had no taxing authority. So, we had proposed a way which would respect parental choice and at the same time ensure that adequate resources would be available to provide for this choice.

Changes to the School Act. In terms of structures, the School Act is perhaps the most important structure in place at the provincial level for all basic educational endeavours. The School Act provides the structure and the legal framework within which the providers of an educational service must act. Accordingly, although the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms had been in place since 1982 and the Supreme Court judgment was handed down in 1990, the establishment and implementation of a francophone governance model were extremely difficult without making significant changes to the School Act. The situation in Saint Isidore which emerged because of the difficulties associated with the funding mechanism in place during 1988 supports this view.

The francophone community was now more convinced that it wanted a governance model like the one proposed in the Report of the French Language Working Committee. To this end, L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, supported by La Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta, continued to pressure the provincial government for required changes to the School Act which would allow for the establishment of the desired governance structure. However, because of the political process involved and the time required to pass legislation, it was not until 1994 that Bill 8, the amended School Act, was finally passed. The passing of this Bill not only provided the required structure for francophone governance, it presented sweeping reforms to school education in general.

The Francophone Education Regions and their governing structures. The 1988 School Act amended in 1994 recognized the rights of Francophones to establish, to manage and to control their own schools as outlined in the Charter and interpreted in the Dickson Judgment. With these amendments, the province was divided into seven geographical regions for the purposes of creating a structure which would give Francophones the right to govern their own schools. In dividing the province geographically into seven regions, the province effectively ensured that all Francophones in Alberta had access to a governance structure which was vested with the responsibility of providing educational services for that geographical region. These Regions are essentially synonymous with the geographical notion of school districts. Each Region at present, is at a different stage of governance. Three have Authorities, three have Councils, and one has not yet developed a formal structure. (See Table 3-1 School Governance of Alberta's School Jurisdictions.)

i. The Francophone Education Regional Authority. The structure representing the most developed stage of governance is the Francophone Education Regional Authority. To date, three of the seven Regions established are being governed by a Regional Authority. These are the Conseil scolaire régional du Nord-Ouest N° 1 in the Peace River area, Le conseil de l'école nouvelle N° 2 in the Saint Paul-Bonnyville area and the Conseil scolaire régional du Centre-Nord N° 4 in the Edmonton area. These Authorities, which are similar to school boards, enjoy many of the same rights vested in school boards with the notable exception of taxation and the right to establishing separate school jurisdictions.

The current School Act permits school districts to requisition a supplementary tax. Because the right of taxation has not been extended to the Francophone Education Regional Authorities, children remain residents of either the public or separate board. Should

Table 3-1 School Governance of Alberta's School Jurisdictions

	Majority School Jurisdictions		Minority School Jurisdictions		
Legal Basis	School Districts[1]		Francophone Education Regions		
Status	Public (pub. s. d.)	Separate (sep. s. d.)	Francophone Education Regional Authority	Coordinating Council	Dormant
Determination of religious status	District	District	N/A[2]	N/A	N/A
Governance	Elected board of trustees	Elected board of trustees	Elected board of trustees	Appointed by Minister	N/A
Who can run for office?	Electorate at large excluding electors of sep. s. d.	Elector who is resident of sep. s. d.	Elector at large	N/A	N/A
Voting rights	Residents of pub. s. d. not electors of sep. s. d.	Separate school supporters	Parents of students only[3]	N/A	N/A
Taxation rights	Special tax levy permitted	Special tax levy permitted	No taxation authority	No taxation authority	No taxation authority
# operating Oct. 1, 1997	41	18	3	3	1

[1]These include school districts, school divisions, and regional school divisions.
[2]Although there is no legal basis to establish religious schools, religious status is determined at the board level and applied at the school level.
[3]Francophone parents also vote for either the public or separate school district of which they are residents.

supplementary taxes be requisitioned, these are, for the most part, redirected to the Francophone Education Regional Authority.

Another difference is in the governance of religious education. In the regular school districts, provisions are made for the establishment of both public and separate school boards. In establishing the governance structure for francophone schools, this right was not extended to the extent enjoyed by the majority. The Francophone Education Regional Authorities are charged with the responsibility of operating schools within their jurisdictions. As such, the religious question is one which is dealt with at the school level. Once established, it is the school's community which determines whether that school will be a public non-confessional school or a confessional school.

In terms of powers, with the exceptions noted, members of these Regional Authorities are elected and govern the operation of the schools under their jurisdiction as would regular school board members. As such, they establish policies, budgets, priorities, and comply with the directions set by the province.

ii. The Coordinating Councils: In those Francophone Education Regions where the community did not ask for the establishment of a Francophone Education Regional Authority, a Coordinating Council was established. To establish these Councils, the Minister of Education called on the community to submit the names of potential council members for his consideration. Once submitted, the Minister then established these Councils by appointing members from the names submitted. Typically, these Councils are made up of three members: a president, a vice-president and a secretary-treasurer. The main purpose of these Councils is to recruit potential students for francophone schools operated by the local public or separate school jurisdiction and also to generate an interest in the community. Once the community determines that there is a sufficient interest, a request is made to the Minister to replace the council with a Francophone Education Regional Authority. To date, there are three Coordinating Councils established in their respective Regions of the province. One has been established in the Fort McMurray Region, the Calgary Region, and the Lethbridge Region. These Coordinating Councils work with the francophone community in their region and with local school jurisdictions to provide educational services for francophone students in the Region. In the case of the Lethbridge Region, services have been purchased from the Conseil scolaire régional du Centre-Nord N° 4 in Edmonton to operate a francophone school for the Region and in the Calgary and Fort McMurray Regions, the Coordinating Councils are working with the local public and separate school jurisdictions to provide educational services for their students.

iii. A region with no governing structure. Of the seven regions established, the Red Deer Region has not asked for nor has it been granted a governing structure. As such, it remains dormant in spite of the fact that a francophone school is operating in its Region. This school has been established as a result of a request made by a group of parents directly to the Edmonton Francophone Education Regional Authority. Through an agreement, administrative services are purchased from this Authority and the school is operating.

Other structures. Participants in this study identified the following other structures in place which influence to some degree the operation of francophone school jurisdictions.

i. Le Comité consultatif auprès du Ministre sur l'éducation francophone. In the Fall of 1996, the Minister of Education established a committee which would advise him directly on issues relating to francophone education in Alberta. Members are appointed to this committee by the Minister and one member is selected from each of the following organizations: the Francophone Education Regional Authorities, the Francophone Coordinating Councils, L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, La Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the educators employed by the Francophone Education Regional Authorities, and the Director of the Language Services Branch from Alberta Education. Although the committee has only met four times to date, there is a common understanding among study participants that the francophone community is indeed fortunate to have this structure in place and that this committee is extremely important in setting the direction of francophone schooling in Alberta.

ii. Language Services Branch. Within Alberta Education this Branch assumes responsibility for the development of francophone education at the provincial government level. To this end, officials in this Branch develop programs of studies, identify resources, and provide assistance in the initial implementation of programs for francophone schools. This Branch is also referred to as La Direction de l'éducation française.

iii. Department of Canadian Heritage. In addition to providing supplementary funding both for infrastructure support for francophone education and for the initial implementation of francophone governance, the Department of Canadian Heritage also has a financial agreement with the community. The agreement in place is referred to as the Canada-Community Agreement in Official Languages and according to one study participant, its

purpose is to promote and develop that community so that its members are fully participant within society. Officials at the Department of Canadian Heritage believe that if you assist people in becoming more active, this will have an impact on their quasi-political role on school boards and so on. And so, when they become very concerned, they do something about it!

iv. La Fédération des conseils scolaires et des conseils de coordination. The membership of this organization is made up of one representative from each of the six active Francophone Education Regional Authorities. Members of this organization meet approximately five times per year to share information and discuss ways of maximizing resources which including ways to determine how best to lobby and exert political pressure on governments.

v. L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta. Of the many roles that this organization has in the area of community development, this association has, as one of its mandates, the mandate to encourage, to facilitate and to develop French language learning and teaching in Alberta. However, it must be noted that since the implementation of francophone school governance in 1994, the association has largely withdrawn its lobbist role and has turned this dossier over to La Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta. In the area of education, the association is now concentrating its efforts on developing French language offerings in the post-secondary sector.

vi. Les Conseils d'école. Consistent with their role outlined in section 17 of the School Act, Province of Alberta, the school council serves as an advisory body to its school's administration. Its membership is made up, in part, of parents who send their children to that particular school. School councils monitor their school's operation and provide advice as they deem appropriate.

vii. The Roman Catholic Church. Although the Francophone Education Regional Authorities were established as non-confessional governing structures, the majority of parents who send their children to francophone schools are Roman Catholic. As such, most of the schools established have opted to be Catholic schools, reflecting the interests of the majority. Accordingly, the majority of francophone schools operated by the three Regional Francophone Authorities as well as those operated in Calgary and Fort McMurray, are in essence Catholic schools. The result is that the church exerts its influence in the area of policy development. One participant expressed the church's influence in these terms.

> Un groupe, par exemple, qui a une influence plus grande, très subtile, très discrète, c'est l'Église. Si on exagère trop, à un moment donné, comme ils l'ont déjà fait à une telle Église l'année passée, 'Bang! That's enough! Vous allez trop loin avec vos affaires. Tu sais, on veut la religion! Bang! Bang! Bang!' La présence de l'Église est toujours là.

viii. La Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta. This federation is a provincial organization which promotes the French language and culture by assisting local communities establish francophone preschool facilities and schools. Its membership is made up of representatives from the various parent committees and school councils which work directly with francophone schools and preschools. As an organization, members meet regularly every three months and host a yearly conference for all francophone parents in Alberta.

ix. La Commission nationale des parents francophones. This organization unites all of the provincial federations of francophone parents. Like the provincial organizations, members meet regularly and share the same goal of promoting the French language and culture by establishing preschool and school services in the French language.

x. Francophonie jeunesse de l'Alberta. The main role of this organization is to incite Albertans between the ages of 14 and 25 who are proficient in the French language to discover who they are and to realize their full potential. To achieve these objectives, Francophonie jeunesse de l'Alberta offers a number of workshops and courses designed to develop leadership in this clientele's youth.

xi. Superintendents' meetings. The three superintendents of the Francophone Education Regional Authorities meet regularly, approximately every six weeks, to discuss common issues, share information and seek ways of working together to maximize resources. They also use this structure to invite particular stakeholders to attend their meetings. One participant described his participation in the following way. "Alors, je suis invité aux réunions des directeurs généraux pour participer à l'ordre du jour qu'ils ont établi par rapport à certains domaines qui reviennent au ministère."

xii. Faculté Saint-Jean. This institution is a faculty of the University of Alberta which offers degree programs in the French language. Many of its employees are actively involved in the francophone community. As well, it is believed that this institution's survival depends on the success of the francophone school and as such, its faculty and staff

are perceived to have some influence in the area of policy development for the Francophone Education Regional Authorities.

Current Issues

The main issues presented in this section represent those issues which were identified by the 12 study participants who were in a position to influence policy direction in Alberta's newly established francophone school jurisdictions at the time this research was conducted. All of the data provided by the participants were carefully analyzed and the issues and concerns shared were grouped into five main categories. These categories relate to the community, credibility, resources, enrollments, and management and control. In each of these categories, many subcategories were used to organize and report the findings.

The Community

The first area of concern identified by study participants was that of community. Within this topic, three major issues were identified. These are sparsity, the nature of the francophone community, and the school community.

Sparsity

In dividing the province into seven regions for the purposes of managing francophone schooling, all section 23 students potentially have access to an administrative structure charged with delivering French minority language educational services. Because of the large geographic areas involved combined with rather small numbers of students who, at present, wish to access educational services provided by the Francophone Education Regional Authorities, one of the challenges becomes that of determining "where numbers warrant." Prior to the establishment of the seven Francophone Education Regional Authorities, the onus of determining sufficient numbers was left in the hands of the majority. As a result of current governing structures in place, this task is now with the francophone community.

One of the major barriers to providing services in these regions relates to distance. From an administrative stance, providing opportunities for staff members to meet and collaborate with each other has budgetary implications not present in both larger urban boards and the more populated rural boards. Providing attractive programs for small numbers in rather isolated communities is also a challenge, especially at the secondary level. Providing opportunities for students to meet their peers in extracurricular programs

and other organized activities as well as getting parents from one school community to meet parents from another school community is a major challenge. The costs involved in providing attractive educational services over a large geographic area are indeed an issue.

Another issue relating to sparsity is the notion of the actual clientele itself. Although some areas in the province may have a substantial francophone population concentrated in a small geographic area, not all section 23 students take advantage of the services offered by the Francophone Education Regional Authorities. Accordingly, even in such areas as Peace River, Saint Paul, Bonnyville and Edmonton which are known to have significant francophone populations, providing cost effective educational services remains a challenge because of the actual numbers who avail themselves of the services provided within a given region.

In real terms, 14 autonomous francophone schools have been established to date and work continues so that additional ones will be established. However, the reality is such that they are small in terms of enrollment, serve a large geographical area, and according to the participants, are very costly to operate.

The Nature of the Francophone Community

It appears from the understandings shared by study participants that the nature of the francophone community is very complex. To address the nature of this community, the sources of its membership will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of the nature of the larger community as well as the school community.

Sources. The first observation the study participants noted with respect to the community is that it is indeed very diverse. To that end, participants believe that Francophones come primarily from three sources. The first of these sources to be identified is Québec, a province where French is the official and somewhat dominant language of communication. According to participants, Francophones living in Alberta who come from Québec have their own way of affirming themselves in both the franco-albertan community as well as the larger albertan community. It is believed that these individuals use French as a language of communication more freely and openly than Francophones coming from other areas. Participants in this group were referred to as having a majority mentality. This mentality is the result of having been raised in a socio-cultural milieu where the language used by the majority is French. The result is that these individuals use the French language in every day situations with much more confidence and affirmation than those who come from a setting where the language may not enjoy such status.

Describing the second source was not as easy a task. In general terms, participants identified this group as being made up of those individuals who were born in Alberta from parents who passed on their francophone heritage from one generation to the next. However, they perceived that the French language abilities and cultural identity varied greatly among individuals making up this group. One participant best described this group in the following terms.

> Je pense qu'il y a trois types de Francophones venant de souches Albertaines. Il y a les Francophones complètement assimilés, qui savent absolument rien puis qui ne veulent rien savoir du français. Il y a un autre groupe qui sont des Francophones de maisons. Ça veut dire que pourvu qu'il n'y ait pas d'Anglophones autour et ainsi de suite, ils vont parler en français, vivre un peu leur francophonie. Puis, ensuite le troisième groupe, ce sont les gens qui ne s'expriment pas totalement correctement à tout temps, mais qui sont certainement prêts à s'afficher puis à s'identifier à la communauté francophone.

The third source identified involves those individuals who come from parts of the world where the French language enjoys a certain status. This includes those individuals who come from parts of Canada other than Québec where the French language enjoys a status as one of Canada's official languages. French speaking parts of Ontario and New Brunswick are the two most often named regions within this country. Concerning sources outside of the country, countries where French is or has been recognized as a language of communication were mentioned. These include such sources as Vietnam, Haiti, certain African countries, and Europe. However, it must be noted that not all participants viewed individuals from this group as having the history within this country necessary to permit them to affirm their language rights and further, that the Charter does not extend to protect these individuals. One participant expressed this latter point in the following way. "Si tu as un immigrant qui parle français, c'est un immigrant. Il n'est pas citoyen Canadien donc il n'est pas un ayant droit. Techniquement, ses enfants ne seraient pas capable de rentrer dans une école francophone."

Nature of community. Although it is believed that the francophone community is made up of the three major sources identified, differences appear to exist when comparing the make up of the rural francophone community and that of the urban community. Participants in this study believed that the rural community tended to be made up of individuals and families who are descendants of francophone families who settled in these

communities and accordingly have a history within that region. The urban community on the other hand tended to be made up of individuals coming from all three sources identified: Franco-Alberta, Québec, and others. Although this difference was noted, the descriptions of the community, whether rural or urban, tended to be very similar.

The first observation shared was that as policy makers, participants in this study were representing the interests of Franco-Albertans who hold the status of being a minority group. As such, one of the observations made was that as a people, Franco-Albertans have suffered great losses to their dignity as a result of living in and being educated by the majority. One participant described an incident she had with a parent which illustrates this individual's lived experience.

> Puis, il y a un parent qui me disait il y a à peu près quatre ou cinq ans: 'Ah, tu sais, Diane, nous autres les Francophones, de toutes façons, on n'était pas bon. On nous mettait dans la voie 13 et puis quand on ne réussissait pas, bien, on ne terminait même pas notre secondaire cinq. Puis, si on le terminait, on le terminait sur la fesse. Puis, ça arrêtait là. Tu sais, c'est vrai qu'on n'était pas tellement intelligent.' Moi je dis: 'Pardon? Pas intelligent?' Mais elle a dit: 'Bien oui! Ceux qui étaient intelligents ont continué. C'est eux autres qui ont les gros postes aujourd'hui à Edmonton,... J'ai dit: 'Pensez-vous vraiment que vous n'étiez pas intelligents?' 'Bien oui.' Ça m'a fait tellement de peine. J'aurais pleuré dans ses bras comme un enfant.

Another participant supported these understandings of the francophone community as a clientele whose members had suffered an immense loss of dignity by not having been educated in their first language. As such, the clientele is largely made up of individuals who are at varying degrees of being assimilated both linguistically as well as culturally. As a result, it is a "clientèle qui est probablement très largement défavorisée au plan développement cognitif, c'est à dire l'habileté de fonctionner à un niveau décontextualisé avec la langue française; peut-être même les idées." This participant went on to explain that

> le français qu'on entend, c'est souvent un français contextualisé de patin, de table, de billards, etc., et puis que dans la grande société, quand les idées sont véhiculisées, c'est très souvent dans le contexte des bureaux et de réunions en anglais. Alors, il se peut que les élèves proviennent en grande partie de foyers, pour toutes fins pratiques, sémilingues, où ils peuvent très

bien parler en français et en anglais au niveau contextualisé sans accents et tout ça. Mais, au niveau de manipuler les idées, ce n'est pas évident.

The result of this loss of dignity, according to several participants, underpins the observable behaviours and characteristics of the francophone community. To begin with, it is a common belief among participants that individuals making up the francophone minority do not like themselves. One participant best expressed this notion in these terms.

> Dans le fond, on ne s'aime pas. On est très exigeant et on n'est pas tellement tolérants de ceux qui sont dedans ni de ceux qui sont dehors notre communauté. Il manque une certaine tolérance parce que, dans le fond, on n'est pas bien dans dans notre peau. La francophonie n'est pas encore bien dans sa peau. Comme minoritaire, on vit avec ça toute notre vie. On n'est jamais parfaitement bien dans notre peau. On ne voudrait pas avoir d'accent lorsqu'on on parle anglais, mais on voudrait bien parler français. Tu sais, on veut les deux sans en sacrifier un. We can't come to terms with that. C'est très psychologique.

The participants explained that living in a minority situation has taken its toll on the community. However, in recent years, legislation has been passed and programs implemented with the view to reversing the damages being done to the francophone people and its community. One of the most important pieces of legislation, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, gave rights to Francophones and provided individuals within this community the structure required to regain rights which they felt had been taken away. However, participants noted that a lot of work had to be done before the community could enjoy these rights.

In order to realize these rights, the community had to organize itself and create many structures. With the creation of these structures, the community witnessed the emergence of many new leaders. To achieve progress, these leaders often had to resort to extreme measures. In describing this process, one participant had the following to contribute.

> Je pense qu'on a pris un côté fort parce que quand tu veux faire des gros changements, il faut que tu sois extrémiste. Tu n'as pas de choix faire des révolutions sociales. Ça prend de l'extrémiste, des extrémistes. Mais, quand tu es extrémiste, tu peux faire mal à d'autres et on risque vraiment d'aliéner les gens complètement. Puis, ça prends longtemps de bâtir des ponts après.

Although the methods used to realize their rights with respect to establishing francophone schools did alienate many potential members, the francophone community did survive. This community, however, is not without its characteristics. One of these characteristics shared by participants is that individuals tend to judge each other based on their differences. In attempting to share what she understood by the term community, one participant described a group of individuals who appeared to focus more on the individual differences among its members rather than on those values which could serve to unify the community. She expressed this in these terms.

> Lorsqu'on travaille dans une école catholique, on parle de communion. Est-ce que les gens savent vraiment c'est quoi une communauté ou de créer communion? Prenons par exemple la question de la religion dans le projet de l'école française. Pourquoi les gens vont dire: 'Est-il vraiment catholique, lui?' Pourquoi est-ce qu'on se sent obligé de faire des jugements? Pourquoi est-ce qu'on ne se retire pas puis q'on essaie au lieu de trouver concertation dans des valeurs de bases qui nous réunissent? Pourquoi est-ce qu'on cherche à se déchirer ou se disséquer au lieu de trouver une façon que tout le monde peut avoir sa place et qu'on puisse tous se respecter? Mais, la réalité est telle qu'il y a des gens qui cherchent à nommer ce qui est différent au lieu de ce qui est pareil.

One of the consequences to the francophone community's judgmental tendencies is that it has created a sort of class structure within the community. Although participants did not describe in detailed terms this hierarchy, mention was made that French language proficiency, ethnic purity, religious affiliation, where one came from in geographical terms, and livelihood all contributed to determining one's status within the community. The result of this differentiation is that the community is seen as being extremely exclusive and in so being, may be excluding many potential members. One participant shared these understandings on this issue.

> Je trouve que dans notre communauté, on n'est pas arrivé à respecter tous les membres de la communauté à part égale dans sa dignité et dans son potentiel. Il y a comme des classes dans la communauté. Il y a même certains individus qui sont pourtant venus de milieux très simples mais, une fois que ceux-ci ont acqui les échelons, ils trouvent difficile d'être inclusif et d'aller chercher une variété, de reconnaître une variété de la culture, de la

langue, du talent auprès de la communauté. Alors, ce n'est pas aussi évident qu'on est aussi inclusif qu'on pourrait l'être.

In creating this class structure, it appears that the community is in the process of defining itself. Participants believe that this stratified community is unconsciously defining a set of values which is serving to define the desirable norms, acceptable beliefs, and expected behaviours of its members. In identifying and validating these norms, beliefs, and behaviours, the community is inadvertently exerting pressures and forces onto its membership to conform to this homogenous definition of itself. Participants note that in this process of defining itself and becoming more homogenous, many individuals are being alienated from the francophone community simply because they cannot or will not conform due to such barriers as race, ethnic heritage, religious affiliation, socio-economic status, or for such reasons as linguistic and cultural proficiency. In the end, participants tended to suggest that there was a tension between maintaining a homogenous community with a definite penchant toward an elitist cultural and linguistic purity and creating a viable community in terms of numbers.

Another characteristic of the francophone community identified by the interviewees was that it manages opposing points of view or conflict in such a way that the result often leads to deep divisions within the community. One participant described the impact that establishing a francophone school had in the community.

> J'ai vu des jeunes enfants se faire attaquer par d'autres juste parce qu'ils viennent d'une autre école. J'ai vu des adultes qui ne parlent pas à d'autres ou qui ne se saluent pas dans la rue, juste parce qu'il a choisi une différente école que l'autre. J'ai vu des choses qui n'avaient pas d'allure.

On this same issue, another participant offered these observations with respect to the way the francophone community responds.

> On a une clientèle qui est, d'après moi, très exigeante, souvent bien éduquée, très perspicace, assez impliquée et puis toujours aux aguets: une clientèle qui ne pardonne pas facilement puis qui semble toujours questionner son choix. En plus, aussitôt qu'elle n'a pas ce qu'elle veut, elle nous menace.

One participant offered this explanation for the way in which members of this community manage opposing points of view and conflict.

> La francophonie, autant ici qu'ailleurs, est tellement habituée à lutter. Elle a lutté pour ses programmes d'immersion, ses programmes francophones, ses écoles francophones. Elle lutte pour la Cité Francophone, elle lutte tout le temps. À un moment donné, les Francophones ne savent pas que tout d'un coup, que c'est le temps d'arrêter de lutter ou qu'il y a d'autres façons d'arriver à son objectif sans lutter. Peut-être qu'on peut y arriver autrement; peut-être que le miel marcherait autant que d'autres choses.

This participant went on to say that it will take some time before members realize that they are now in control of their own schools and that they will have to modify or change the strategies they use to effectively use the power they have.

Another issue raised by several participants was that as a minority, Francophones tend to measure themselves against the majority community. In so doing, they tend to create extreme pressures to establish all the services and infrastructure that the majority has. For example, the francophone community feels the need to have its own radio, television, newspaper, library, scouts and cubs, business organizations, choir, drama clubs, post-secondary offerings, schools, a consortium and other school support services, to name but a few of these services. Given the size of the community and the available expertise within it, providing all of these services tends to be extremely taxing on both human and fiscal resources available.

Most of the services which are provided and the infrastructure which has been built have been established in part because of the lobbying efforts of leaders within the francophone community. Some of these services and the accompanying infrastructure would not be there were it not for the methods and approaches used by the leaders of the community. Unlike the strategies that may yield results for the majority, these leaders had to resort to means that went beyond simply requesting assistance. Participants mentioned the use of constant lobbying, sit-ins, and ultimately using the judicial system up to the Supreme Court of Canada to obtain those services and accompanying infrastructure to which members believed the community was entitled. According to study participants, the result is that the community is perceived by many members from the majority community as well as by many members from within the francophone community as being made up of extremists and fanatics.

The perceptions held of the community from individuals from within as well as the perceptions held from outsiders appears to be determined in part by the constant negotiation

occurring in this community. Many of the structures in place are there because of funding agreements which are negotiated for term certain time periods. As such, there is always some negotiation going on and it is this process which acts in part as a catalyst for the community to define itself in terms of its commonly shared values, beliefs, and meanings. However, participants were well aware that the way in which the community proceeds to arrive at a consensus was in itself problematic. One participant expressed her concerns on this issue in the following way.

> Je pense que c'est vraiment important de travailler en équipe, de paraitre en équipe. Ça, ça serait très important. Puis, tu as sûrement des désaccords ou quelque chose, mais que tu sois capable au moins de travailler ça un peu à un consensus avant qu'on se présente officiellement publiquement au niveau de la politique. C'est très nécéssaire, je trouve. Mais, de l'autre côté, ça peut tu se faire? On est tu assez sophistiqué?

All participants expressed some concern for the way in which the francophone community was defining itself and the image that was being created as a result of the processes being used to achieving this definition. In terms of defining itself, individuals appear to be at the stage where differences among individuals are still more important than similarities. One participant summarized this finding in the following way.

> Tu sais, les gens cherchent toujours à se différencier. Ils vont toujours te dire 50 raisons pourquoi un tel ou une telle n'est pas francophone. Mais, à un moment donné, ça devient très fatigant parce que, au lieu de former un groupe, on est souvent un ensemble de groupes qui n'ont à faire les uns avec les autres! En fin de compte, ça nous aide pas, ça! On devrait essayer de travailler ensemble au lieu de toujours chercher pourquoi on ne devrait pas.

The School Community

Once the larger francophone community had obtained recognition that the community had governance over its own schools, one of the issues which had to be addressed was that of implementation of school governance. In some parts of the province, establishing autonomous francophone schools resulted in deep divisions within the francophone community. Accordingly, care had to be taken in defining who could participate politically in the newly established school communities. One participant expressed this issue in the following terms.

> The francophone community was so divided in some parts of the province that once governance was given to the community, we had to ensure that the governing structures which we put in place would be there to serve the interests of those parents who chose to exercise their rights under the Charter. In essence, therefore, we were faced with a situation where the risk for the future of francophone schools came not from the anglophone community but rather from the francophone community itself. The challenge, therefore, became one of protecting the francophone community from itself.

One of the first issues that had to be resolved was to determine who could participate in the governance of these newly established schools and school jurisdictions. Soon after the establishment of the seven regional authorities, the decision was made that for those regions where no schools existed, the Minister would appoint members to the coordinating councils. This was indeed done for three of the regions established: Lethbridge, Calgary, and Fort McMurray. The Red Deer region remained dormant and continues to be so. For the three regions operating francophone schools, the equivalent of school boards had to be established.

The first boards were established for the Peace River, Saint Paul-Bonnyville, and Edmonton Regions. In February of 1994, just before the creation of the seven Francophone Education Regional Authorities, La Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta held a community election in six of the seven regions. No elections were organized for the Red Deer region. This federation then forwarded to the minister the names of those individuals the community had endorsed for each region. For the Edmonton, Peace River and Saint Paul-Bonnyville regions, these individuals went on to be appointed by the Minister as the first trustees of these jurisdictions and for the Lethbridge, Calgary and Fort McMurray regions, these individuals became the first members of the coordinating councils. For subsequent elections the governance structure established permitted anyone who met the criteria set out in the Municipal Elections Act to run for office. In other words, an individual with no children attending a francophone school could hold an elected position as a trustee. However, those eligible to vote were restricted to those parents who sent their children to a francophone school. By doing this, power was vested in the parents which is consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Accordingly, only those parents who have children from grades one through 12 and who send their children to a francophone school have the right to vote for officials presenting themselves for a seat on one of these elected boards.

Now that the schools are operating and that the larger francophone community appears to be more stable and accepting of these newly established schools, discussion is occurring with the view of extending the power base vested in the vote. To this end, extending the right to vote to kindergarten parents, teachers and other staff members of francophone schools, graduates from these schools, parents of graduates, consanguinal relatives, and other community members is being discussed by individuals setting policy in francophone schooling.

School clientele. According to participants, the first students to enroll in the newly created francophone schools not only met the Charter requirements, they also came from homes where the French language and culture were relatively intact. However, as time passes and these schools become more established, more section 23 parents are exercising their rights by enrolling their children in these schools. The result is that schools are getting more and more children whose language and cultural proficiencies vary. Some children begin school with no French language and cultural proficiency whereas in other instances, some children come to school knowing only French. The same diversity holds true for their parents. For some of these parents, it is evident that French is the preferred language of communication whereas in some cases, parents have little or no proficiency in French. Families where the main caregiver is not francophone or where a parent has become assimilated and is no longer proficient in the language are examples of home situations where English may be the preferred language used. Even though the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was set out to give the francophone community the legal basis required to establish francophone schools, participants agree that in many cases a parent with rights under the Charter is not necessarily francophone and or proficient in French.

Another issue with respect to determining the clientele is the French immersion phenomenon. Many participants expressed uncertainty with how to address the issue of non-section 23 parents requesting admission to francophone schools. Several participants noted that requests are coming from French immersion students because of the perceived benefits that a francophone school might offer. According to these participants, such advantages as a stronger program, a more francophone ambiance, transportation, full-time kindergarten, smaller classes and better facilities are all contributing to making francophone schools an attractive option for non-section 23 students. Participants varied with respect to addressing the issue of giving students of non-section 23 parents access to francophone schools. Some participants noted that in terms of both language proficiency and attitude toward the language and culture, some of these students were more francophone that many non-section 23 students. However, other participants expressed concerns with admitting

non-section 23 students because once one member of a family is admitted, all members of the family obtain the rights provided under section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Communication. Most day to day communication as it relates to school business is conducted in French. However, there appear to be differences as to the extent to which French is used as the language of business from one jurisdiction to the next. In one region, according to participants, French is the official language of communication. As such, all communication at the board level is in French and this practice is extended as much as possible to the school level. In other areas, however, school officials have modified their policies to reflect the nature of the schools' clientele and as such, are beginning to endorse some use of English as a language of communication between home and school. One participant explained the rationale in these terms.

> Il faut que les parents comprennent pour qu'ils puissent suivre le progrès de leurs enfants. Alors, cette année on a décidé d'écrire en anglais aux parents anglophones. La plus grande insulte qu'on puisse faire à un Francophone qui est engagé dans le système, c'est de lui envoyer une lettre dans les deux langues. S'il s'adonne à voir le mauvais bord, on est fini. La plus grande insulte qu'on puisse faire à un Anglophone, c'est de lui envoyer une lettre qui n'est qu'en français. Alors, cette année, aux Francophones, on leur envoie la correspondance en français. Aux parents qui ont des enfants puis qui sont anglophones, on leur envoie la correspondance en anglais. Il peuvent la lire dans leur langue et se sentir confortable. C'est à cause du fait qu'on a une clientèle dont les enfants sont issus de mariages exogames et ils ont le droit de savoir ce qui se passe au sujet de la vie de leur enfant dans les écoles. C'est facile, c'est simple et on espère que les Francophones ne se sentiront pas trahis par cette démarche. Ça été délicat, mais, je pense que la façon qu'on l'a fait cette année, ça semble bien répondre aux besoins.

Other participants supported the notion that communication in francophone school jurisdictions had to be adjusted to meet the clientele's needs. One participant added that with the current demographic trends, it was in the interests of these jurisdictions to modify their policies governing language of communication. He put it in these terms.

> Bien, a l'heure actuelle, je dirais qu'au moins 50% des jeunes dans nos écoles viennent de familles interculturelles et ça va augmenter. Le plus

> longtemps que tu vas, le moins de Francophones qu'il va y avoir. Alors, il faut élargir la définition de qui on est et de faire tout dans notre possible afin d'être plus accueillant à tous les ayants droit qui choisissent nos écoles. Rien n'empêche que l'enfant qui a un parent francophone puis un parent cri ou un parent ukrainien de première langue, ne puisse pas avoir la fierté d'être francophone, de connaître la culture francophone, mais d'aussi connaître le cri et d'avoir la fierté de la culture indienne ou bien ukrainienne.

Participants tended to suggest overall that the structures were in place to support the efforts of the francophone people, however, that policies had to evolve to meet the needs of the clientele. Given the nature of this clientele, this included, in some instances, the need to be more open to the phenomenon of intercultural marriages.

Establishing Credibility

The second category of issues to be identified in this research centered on the issue of establishing credibility. Issues in this category were further organized into four sub-categories. These are getting started, societal status, le projet éducatif, and leadership.

Getting Started

The Francophone Education Regional Authorities were established in such a way as to provide an alternate educational service in the French language. As these authorities were conceived, they have a mandate to provide a service to a specific clientele. However, because of the optional nature of the program, section 23 parents are not obliged to send their children to schools operated by these authorities. As such, even though the law in Alberta obliges all children between six and 16 years of age to attend school, these newly created jurisdictions are not guaranteed students as are the public and the separate jurisdictions. One participant described this challenge in the following way.

> Quant aux conseils publics et catholiques, ces élèves-là doivent s'adresser à ce conseil-là. Alors, il y a carrément une espèce de guarantie d'existence tandis que nous autres, c'est réellement une espèce d'entreprise et ce n'est pas un cadeau essayer de convaincre des gens qui ont subi 80 ans d'assimilation d'embarquer dans le projet éducatif que nous, on avance.

Another barrier to getting established was the fact that there are many programs already established for this clientele. The first of these was the French immersion program.

These programs have been in Alberta since the early 1970s and in the beginning, many Francophones perceived these programs as meeting the needs of their children. Trying to convince parents, who in many cases attended these programs themselves, to consider a francophone program is somewhat challenging given the reputation that French immersion programs have. One participant expressed this difficulty in these terms.

> Il faut être capable de travailler avec des familles qui ont des enfants à ce niveau-là et dire: 'Give us a chance. Voici ce qu'on peut faire.' Parce que la minute qu'ils sont dans le système anglais ou immersion, les gens s'engagent par rapport à ça, et, they like it. And, it's good! Il n'y a rien de mal avec ces systèmes. Alors, c'est sûr qu'ils vont dire: 'Bien oui, mais c'est bon'! Je le sais que c'est bon! 'Mais, peut-être si tu nous avais essayés, nous autres aussi ça aurait été bon.' Mon but ultime, c'est que le jeune qui finit à 18 ans va être le meilleur finissant bilingue en Alberta.

Another major challenge facing these newly established schools is that they have a very short history. To date only three of these schools have seen a graduating class educated in this system from kindergarten through grade 12. It must be noted that all three of these schools began operating under the auspices of another board, as the Francophone Education Regional Authorities were only established in 1994. This lack of history contributes to both the uncertain credibility of the programs offered as well as to the vulnerability of the overall integrity of these schools. When, for instance, problems or conflicts arise, it becomes very easy for the dissatisfied client to talk unfavourably about the school in the community thereby tarnishing its already fragile reputation. One participant described this phenomenon by sharing this story.

> Notre école secondaire est très mal vue comme institution à présent. Dans le temps, elle a déjà été vue comme une bonne institution, mais là, elle ne l'est plus dans la perception des gens. Moi, j'y vais souvent à cette école-là. Je vais là plus qu'à n'importe quelle autre école; même trois fois par jour. Et, je ne vois pas ou je vois rarement ce que les gens me disent. Les gens disent: 'Eh, la drogue à l'école secondaire'! La drogue à l'école secondaire? Tabernouche! Il n'y a pas eu un enfant de suspendu! On n'en a pas poigné un! Il n'y a personne qui a vu de la drogue cette année! Tu vois? D'autres vont dire: 'Ah, les jeunes, ça fume partout'! Oui, les jeunes fument à un tel endroit à côté à 25 pieds carrés. C'est là où ils fument. Mais, ça c'est encore

des gens qui veulent soit c---- sur l'école ou des gens qui ont sorti leur enfant de l'école et ils se trouvent une façon de justifier leur décision.

The vulnerability of these schools is in part attributable to their relative newness. Because there are few graduates of these schools who have gone on to pursue successful post-secondary studies and careers, parents are not yet willing to fully invest their faith in these institutions. Accordingly, many parents demonstrate this lack of total trust by keeping a watchful eye on the way in which these schools are managed. One participant described this in these terms.

> On a une clientèle qui est très exigeante, souvent bien éduquée, très perspicace, assez impliquée et puis toujours aux aguets: une clientèle qui ne pardonne pas facilement puis surtout une clientèle qui semble toujours questionner son choix. En autres mots: 'On a tu vraiment pris la bonne décision?' C'est comme on est second best. Il y a catholique et public. Nous aussi on est public mais, il faut toujours faire nos preuves. Les parents nous menacent. Il y en a qui nous disent: 'Écoute-là! Si vous ne réparez pas vos autobus, moi je sors mes enfants. Si c'est un tel qui enseigne, s'il y a plus que 25 élèves dans cette classe, ou si mon enfant doit prendre l'autobus pour plus de 50 minutes, moi je sors mes enfants'! Il y a toujours, toujours ce contexte de menaces que je trouve fatigant, frustrant. Mais, je l'explique en disant que les gens ne comprennent pas encore ce que c'est l'éducation française et puis les gens ne sont pas encore pleinement engagés. Puis, ça, ça s'explique du fait qu'on est jeune. Le Conseil est en sa troisième année seulement. On ne s'est peut-être pas encore suffisamment bien expliqué et puis on n'a pas encore fait nos preuves. Ça va prendre du temps faire nos preuves. Il faut devenir un organisme, autant au niveau des conseils que des écoles, excessivement crédible dans la communauté; tant francophone qu'anglophone. Qu'à un moment donné les gens disent; 'That's a good board. That's a good school!'

The challenge for these school jurisdictions, therefore, is one of competing with other school jurisdictions for students. Given that francophone students are not obliged to attend these schools, the best way to attract students appears to be by offering a level of education which is not available in other jurisdictions. Given that other boards are capable of offering excellent educational programs in English, French immersion and French first language, francophone school jurisdictions must look to offering superior programs and

producing graduates who are better equipped to compete in post grade 12 situations. One participant expressed this in the following way.

> Si on veut survivre, il faut qu'on ait un très bon programme de français; meilleur que l'immersion. De plus, il faut que nos jeunes soient aussi compétents en anglais que les finissants des programmes anglophones. Et, un troisième défi, il faut que nos finissants soient très à l'aise en informatique. Autrement dit, il faut que nos finissants soient des trilingues; français, anglais et informatique. Il faut adhérer un peu à la mentalité de Frank McKenna du Nouveau-Brunswick qui dit: 'Nous, on met des gens sur le marché qui peuvent handle all three. On a un produit qui est différent, spécial, vendable, et même supérieur! Alors, c'est tout un défi, ça!

Another challenge raised by participants which relates to the issue of credibility has to do with facilities. According to some participants, many of the first francophone schools established were placed in less desirable facilities which in many instances had been vacant for some time. To complicate the issue, these jurisdictions were often faced with the need to renovate facilities with relatively small projected enrollments. The result has often been that these newly established jurisdictions had to offer competitive programs in facilities which were clearly inadequate. Many participants described the onerous task of preparing a site for school opening with limited resources. This often resulted in a facility which, in comparison to neighbouring schools, was inadequate. Participants shared their frustrations on this issue by describing schools which were located in isolated fields removed from urban centres or schools lacking the basics of a gymnasium. The location and quality of the facilities in themselves seemed to contribute to the jurisdiction's overall status and credibility within both the minority and the majority society.

Although identified as a major concern, the situation appears to be changing. One participant described with great enthusiasm a new facility which was currently being built in a francophone centre in anticipation for school opening in the fall of 1997. From the story shared by this participant, it appears that facilities in and of themselves are the greatest determiner of enrollments for these jurisdictions. Although in this jurisdiction enrollments have been declining since the opening of its first school, this participant appeared convinced that the new facilities would not only reverse this trend, but would present a new problem of having to deny some students access to the program offered because of established criteria for admission. However, another participant shared a more cautious

view with respect to the influence of facilities on student enrollment. He summarized his understandings on the issue in the following way.

> Never assume anything! The field of dreams approach is b-------! Build it doesn't mean they are going to come! It works in movies. Puis, ce n'est pas seulement vrai dans la francophonie. Je veux dire, il y a des curling rinks de vide partout et puis des hôpitaux de vide partout.

Another issue in the area of credibility appears to be one associated with the overall commitment to the program. On the one hand, some participants believed that the program serves the needs of students extremely well and supported these views by referring to research that clearly demonstrates that graduates from these programs are well equipped to enter the work force or to pursue post-secondary studies. One participant expressed this in these terms.

> Notre expérience venant de Rivière-la-Paix nous indique que le taux de finissants est presqu'à 100%; no drop-outs plus ou moins. Ils ont aussi démontré qu'au moins 50% de leurs élèves ont poursuivi des études post-secondaires. Je ne dis pas universitaire, mais je parle de SAIT, NAIT, et ainsi de suite. En plus, on a eu les études de l'Ontario et du Nouveau-Brunswick qui nous démontrent que les Francophones ont toujours bien réussi après leur douzième année lorsqu'ils ont fréquenté une école francophone.

On this same issue, however, some participants reported their frustration. One participant went on to say that within the key decision making body governing and operating these newly created francophone school jurisdictions, not all key individuals believed that graduating from a francophone program was a wise investment. This participant described his frustration with having to constantly defend francophone schooling in his jurisdiction from kindergarten through grade 12 not only to the francophone community, but to school trustees themselves. From the many discussions this participant has had with key stakeholders including some trustees in the community, his belief is that there is general support for francophone schools from kindergarten through grade 9. However, beyond that, the commitment by the majority of Francophones is not very evident.

Societal Status

Societal attitudes toward the French language and its use in society appear to influence the overall credibility of these newly established francophone school jurisdictions. Participants shared many examples which appear to undermine the credibility and efforts of these school jurisdictions.

Language status. The first issue raised by participants related to the constitutional discord at the national level. Several participants stated quite clearly that until the French language is given equal status at national and provincial levels, establishing themselves as credible organizations will remain a major challenge. One individual expressed his frustration with this lack of status in the following way.

> Tu sais, quand on a donné un statut égal en pratique à la langue française au Nouveau-Brunswick, on a renversé l'assimilation. Dans aucune autre province a-t-on fait ça actuellement. Alors, le problème n'est pas avec les Québecois qui veulent se séparer. Le problème est avec les autres Canadiens qui ne veulent pas donner du status au français en pratique. Alors, c'est à la majorité de reconnaître le fait qu'on est un pays bilingue et une fois que ceci sera réalisé à la grandeur du pays, le français prendra sa juste place. Et, une fois que ceci sera accompli, on n'aura plus à justifier la raison d'être de nos écoles.

Another concern raised by several participants was the issue of French language use in society. One participant described her frustration with the subtle way in which the French language was given unequal status, even in Québec City. She shared the following conversation she had with an individual while vacationing in that city.

> L'été passé, j'étais à Québec puis j'entre dans une petite boutique. Le premier mot qu'on me dit c'est: 'Welcome!' Alors, elle s'est aperçue tout de suite que j'étais déçue alors elle me dit: 'Madame, vous n'aimez pas ma boutique?' Je lui ai dit: 'Je l'aime beaucoup votre boutique. C'est juste que je ne me sens pas la bienvenue'! Elle dit: 'Pourquoi?' Alors j'ai dit: 'Bien, il n'y a pas un mot de bonjour ou de bienvenue'! Elle dit: 'D'où venez vous?' J'ai dit: 'De l'Alberta'! Elle dit: 'C'est quoi ton problème! Tu es bilingue!' J'ai dit: 'Madame, ce n'est pas parce qu'on est bilingue, c'est aux dépends de nos choix premiers. Qu'on soit chinois, japonais, espagnol, le français, est-ce qu'il y a une place?' Alors, je me suis aperçue que ce n'est pas juste

> en Alberta où le français n'a pas sa place, c'est même dans la ville de Québec. Alors, comment pouvons-nous développer la crédibilité de nos écoles quand la langue elle-même n'a pas grand statut dans la société.

A similar concern was raised with respect to the status of the French language in the business community. One participant shared an observation that the language of commerce, even in small rural Francophone communities, is predominantly English. This participant went further to say that in her experiences within the business community, the general perception was that Francophones who used the French language in business relations might offend potential clients who were not tolerant of its use. The perception, therefore, is that using the French language in the business community could have negative financial implications. The result is that English appears to dominate in the business community.

Although most participants supported the notion that English dominates the business world, one participant shared a story which clearly illustrates that those who control resources can influence language use. In one community, officials with the francophone school jurisdiction were given a rather large sum of money to oversee the renovations and building of new school facilities. Because the official language of communication in this jurisdiction is French, local contractors and other members of the business community began to use French in their dealings with jurisdiction officials. The participant summarizes this phenomenon in the following way. "Avec notre déménagement dans la communauté, il y aura toutes sortes de fall-outs et des spill-offs économiques. Alors, à cause de ça, ils sont embarqués comme tu ne peux pas croire." It appears, therefore, that economic power can influence language use and the status this language will enjoy in a given community.

Language status in both the community and society at large also appears to be determined by the availability of services in that language. One participant shared his despair with the level of services available in French in the following passage.

> Quand je vais encore à Air Canada je ne sais pas combien d'années après la loi sur les langues officielles, à Edmonton ici, je ne peux encore pas recevoir mon avis d'embarquement en français? Aye! Puis c'est si simple! Je n'ai pas encore de services de bureau de postes dans mon secteur le plus francophone qu'il y a à Edmonton, en français? Je suis allé hier chercher une lettre recommandée et je n'aurai pas pu l'avoir si je ne m'étais pas servi de l'Anglais. Alors, tu vois? Ce n'est pas possible! C'est de la foutaise!

> Cela n'a pas de statut pour un jeune, ça! Tu sais, je parle d'un statut réel au niveau de la vraie vie!

Another concern with respect to the status accorded the French language according to some participants was that it does not appear to be accepted in mathematics and in the sciences. This phenomenon appears to have an influence on the confidence that parents have in francophone schooling, especially at the high school level. One participant shared the concerns of some parents on this issue in the following passage.

> Il y a des gens qui m'arrivent au bureau actuellement qui sont dans des positions bien importantes dans la francophonie puis ils me disent: 'Ça pas d'allure l'éducation française après la neuvième année. Étudier en maths puis en sciences, là, sapristi, on va compromettre leur avenir! Tu sais, parce que la vraie vie, là, après l'école, c'est en anglais que ça se fait'! Alors, voilà un défi.

Factors influencing language and school jurisdiction status. The first factor identified by participants as having an influence on the credibility of both the language and the efforts of these newly created school jurisdictions was the governing structure of these schools. Given that the current structure does not have resident students, participants perceived that the programs offered by these newly created francophone school jurisdictions are not mainstream. Accordingly, some participants expressed the view that the programs offered by these jurisdictions are not viewed as legitimate by all who could access them. The very fact that approximately 10% of Section 23 students are enrolled in these jurisdictions tends to validate the opinion that the programs offered truly are alternate in nature.

Another factor which participants identified as a key factor in enhancing the credibility and legitimacy of these programs was the continued survival of francophone communities. In terms of communities, participants referred to the small rural communities rather than the urban francophone communities. One participant expressed this need in the following way.

> Il faut soutenir les communautés de Plamondon, Saint-Paul, Bonnyville, Saint-Isidore, Guy, et ainsi de suite. Elles ont quand même encore une identification francophone et politiquement, c'est très important. Si tu élimines tout le rural puis qu'il n'y a aucune espèce de perception qu'il y a encore des communautés francophones, à mon idée, c'est le début d'un

maudit grand défi. Parce qu'il ne resterait que Edmonton, puis tu ne franciseras jamais Edmonton à moins que tu aurais une arrivée massive et puis tout le monde dit que c'est impossible.

The third factor mentioned by participants as contributing to the legitimacy and status of francophone school jurisdictions was the overall participation rate of Francophones in the dominant society. One participant shared the concern that as a minority, Francophones tended to be underrepresented in influential positions. He expressed this in the following way.

> Étant donné qu'ici en Alberta, on représente environ 2,5% de la population, qu'on soit 2,5% de ceux qui sont dans les hauts fonctionnaires du ministère. Qu'on soit 2,5% de ceux qui gèrent les grosses compagnies. Puis, qu'on soit 2,5% de la force économique et politique pour qu'on contribue à la plénitude de la société Albertaine. Pas rien que pour nous, mais pour tous: s'intégrer complètement comme citoyen de la province et du pays et du monde.

On this issue, another participant underlined the importance of having a francophone community equipped and ready to contribute to both the Albertan and Canadian economies as we continue on the path toward economic globalization.

In addition to the factors mentioned which affect the status that these jurisdictions have, one participant suggested that individual schools, the local communities in which these schools are located, and the families which send their children to these schools also have a role in determining the overall jurisdictional status. He suggested that these three partners together are in a position to create situations which will serve to legitimize the French language and also the reputation of the schools. He expressed this in these terms.

> Un autre défi aussi c'est d'amener, créer un contexte dans lequel il va y avoir une collaboration très étroite entre la famille, la communauté, et l'école pour rendre vivant la langue et pour permettre aux élèves et aux étudiants de pouvoir faire plein de choses à l'extérieur des heures de classes en français pour leur démontrer que c'est signifiant, c'est utile, c'est bon.

Le Projet éducatif

Many participants identified the overall program being offered by francophone schools as a major area of concern. When addressing this area of concern, participants referred to the following four areas of le projet éducatif. These are the vision, the program itself, its implementation, and its evaluation.

Vision. When discussing the issue of vision, participants had much to say. To begin with, one participant emphasized the notion that in Alberta, Francophones were not ready to come together to form one common vision. He expressed this in these terms.

> Le modèle de gestion qu'on a établi est tel que chaque conseil scolaire dans sa propre région peut établir sa vision et sa mission selon les gens de la région. Ceci est important parce que ce n'est pas tout le monde qui a la même vision à travers d'une province, même dans la communauté francophone elle-même.

However, on this same issue, other participants expressed different views. One participant stressed the notion that, given the relative small numbers involved, it was imperative that the francophone community come together and create a common vision for the province's francophone schools. She stated that it was not only possible but rather a necessity to create a vision which reflected "les valeurs et les convictions communes du peuple francophone. Si on ne le fait pas, je veux dire, on fait fausse route." Of importance is the notion that according to these participants, a vision has not yet been defined and articulated.

Although many participants tended to share the notion that a clearly defined vision had not been established to date, other participants seemed to be conveying another message. In sharing his views on the issue of vision, one participant appeared to be saying that senior officials were clear in their understandings of the vision and mandate of francophone schools, however, the francophone community did not understand the fundamental role of francophone schools. He expressed this in the following way.

> La francophonie ne comprend pas le projet de l'école francophone encore: presqu'autant ceux qui sont à l'intérieur que ceux qui sont à l'extérieur. Ceux qui sont à l'intérieur sont tellement puristes qu'ils ne comprennent pas qu'il y a un autre aspect, qui est l'aspect réparateur. On a une responsabilité

> et la Cour suprême nous l'a dit, de réparer l'injustice de l'assimmilation de plusieurs décennies. Donc, pour faire ça, il faut ouvrir les portes. Il faut presqu'évangiliser. Il faut être ouvert à des familles qui parlent moins bien ou qui ne parlent pas du tout. On a de huit à 9 000 en Alberta qui ont des droits mais, parce qu'ils ne comprennent pas le projet, ils sont menacés par le projet alors soit qu'ils n'y adhère pas tout simplement ou qu'ils nous font du tort.

Of importance to the issue of discussing a vision is that it appears much work has yet to be done before decision makers involved with these newly established school jurisdictions can agree upon a common vision and clearly articulate its intentions to the potential clientele. Until this is done, the task of developing a program at the provincial level which is designed to meet the diverse needs of the clientele becomes a major challenge. Educators working in the area of program development can only develop a program once the larger community has defined and come to an agreement on a shared vision. One participant expressed this need in the following way.

> Il faut d'abord avoir la vision. Puis, il faut porter cette vision-là devant soi, en soi, et derrière soi constamment et tout soumettre à la vision. Et, dans cette vision, on a un respect absolu pour la nature de la clientèle constamment et de sa dignité, son potentiel.

Le projet éducatif et sa programmation. When exploring the area of programs offered by francophone schools, most participants used the term projet éducatif. When asked to elaborate and share what they understood by this term, participants offered the following insights.

To begin with, the term projet éducatif appears to be everything that an individual francophone school does in order to realize its established vision. Furthermore, the projet éducatif reflects a pedagogy which is conceived to meet the specific needs of the francophone student. One participant expressed this concept of projet éducatif in the following passage.

> Tous les jours tu as les jeunes devant toi. Quand je te parles de définir des projets éducatifs selon une vision, je parle de principes, de croyances, je te parle de référentiel pédagogique. Je te parle de formation continue. Je te parle de recrutement. Je te parle de ressources. Je parle de qualité de

l'enseignement ou de revendiquer des programmes de qualité. C'est que les jeunes sont là!

In practical terms, this projet éducatif is one which is still in its developmental stages. One participant noted that because autonomous francophone school jurisdictions were not established until very recently, programs offered by these schools are essentially founded on the belief and value systems inherent in the English language and the majority population. As such, using the existing program of studies which was conceived by and for the majority as a starting point for developing francophone programs may not meet the needs of the francophone student. This participant shared the following insights on the issue.

> On dit présentement que la programmation traduite est peut-être l'élément le plus assimilateur chez les Francophones au Canada. C'est une programmation anglaise traduite en français. Les ressources pédagogiques traduites en français et les examens conçus pour les Anglophones traduits en français. Et, c'est les pratiques pédagogiques, les ressources pédagogiques, les ressources didactiques, les programmes, les outils d'évaluation, qui peut-être défavorisent l'élève francophone en milieu minoritaire.

The projet éducatif offered by francophone schools must be conceived, designed and delivered in such a way that it meets the specific needs of its clientele in its present unique context. Participants noted that to do this, educators involved with the projet éducatif must contribute to it cognizant (1) of the specific needs of the francophone student in a minority situation, and (2) of the relevant current research which might guide practice. Research areas mentioned included student learning and the different learning styles, best teaching practices, and the unique needs of the francophone student in a minority setting. One participant expressed this notion in the following way.

> Comme intervenants, est-ce qu'on est capable de baser notre pédagogie sur la théorie? Est-ce qu'on est capable d'aller de dire que notre pratique, notre projet éducatif est basé sur les recherches de France Levasseur-Ouimet ou Allard ou Landry? Moi, comme praticienne, je me dois d'aller lire et de me mettre au courant et de continuellement questionner ma pratique afin que je puisse contribuer de façon juste au projet éducatif de l'école francophone.

Another area of concern raised by some participants was the need to include a cultural component to the projet éducatif. One participant in particular saw the cultural

component as one which would serve to distinguish the francophone program from the French immersion program. This participant expressed the following view on the issue.

> Lorsque tu es dans le cours d'immersion, tout se passe en anglais à l'extérieur de la classe. Mais, dans une école francophone, c'est plus que tout simplement le curriculum de mathématiques, d'études sociales, de sciences et ainsi de suite. Tu as les autres choses. La direction que les cours facultatifs va prendre, les petites nuances de la langue, ton personnel, les activités que l'école choisit telles que l'épluchette de blé d'Inde, la cabane à sucre, et la journée à la Canadienne, et ainsi de suite qui contribuent tous à ce que c'est une école francophone. L'enfant inscrit dans une école francophone doit vivre la francophonie et sa culture.

According to the participants, numbers, especially at the secondary level, seemed to influence the nature of the projet éducatif. Concerns were raised with the costs involved in providing a small number of students, both provincially and at each school, with attractive course offerings designed to meet their needs. One strategy suggested by participants was to explore more cost effective alternative delivery methods in the secondary francophone school. One participant expressed this in these terms.

> Un autre défi serait la brochette de programmes que les écoles vont pouvoir offrir au niveau secondaire, deuxième cycle surtout. Comme on sait, tout le financement vient sur le nombre d'élèves que vous avez. Puis, le plus faible le nombre, bien le moins de ressources financières que vous avez. Ce n'est pas évident de pouvoir offrir 50 différents cours au secondaire deuxième cycle quand vous n'avez que 100 étudiants. Je pense que l'établissement, la mise en place d'un réseau d'éducation à distance devient assez important, surtout pour répondre à ce besoin-là; de pouvoir offrir une brochette de cours large et variée au niveau secondaire deuxième cycle.

The last concern raised with respect to the establishment of the projet éducatif relates to its constant evolution. One participant noted that fostering the evolution of the projet éducatif required constant questioning and reflection. On this issue, he shared the following.

> J'aimerais qu'il y ait dans le système d'éducation française un questionnement constant sur le développement académique de nos élèves par rapport au développement identitaire, culturelle, communautaire, et par

rapport aussi à leur intégration de plus en plus totale à l'ensemble de la société albertaine, canadienne, mondiale, francophone et autres pour qu'ils jouent pleinement leur rôle.

Professional development. While participants shared their understandings of the importance of establishing a common vision and of developing and implementing a projet éducatif based on current research, participants also raised the issue of continued professional development. On this issue, participants emphasized the notion that all professionals working in these jurisdictions must participate and take ownership for their own professional development. While talking specifically of administrators, one participant shared the following.

> Il faut absolument se doter de formation; autant les gestionnaires d'écoles qui sont les administrateurs en premier. Si les administrateurs d'écoles ne sont pas capable de se doter de vision, puis de savoir de où ils partent, puis où ils veulent s'en aller, bien on a un problème. Alors, comme administrateur, si je ne lis pas au niveau des recherches, si je ne m'informe pas avec qu'est-ce qui se passe dans les recherches, comment est-ce que je peux alimenter un projet éducatif et le tenir à jour?

Professional development for teachers was also identified as a need. However, the professional development needs identified in this area appeared to stem from the many teacher preparation programs. Some participants saw the training offered by teacher training institutions as not adequately preparing teachers for the needs of the francophone student. One participant expressed this in the following way.

> Une autre préoccupation, c'est la formation. Tu sais, qu'on sorte des universités aujourd'hui ou même il y a cinq ou 10 ans, on n'est pas préparé à changer. Il faut se déprogrammer. C'est un peu l'expression aujourd'hui. Il faut se déprogrammer de comment on a été formé pour se mettre d'une perspective qui nous permettra d'incorporer les nouvelles recherches. Tu sais, le jeune qui apprend, comment il apprend? Comment fonctionnent-ils les cerveaux? Des styles puis des rythmes d'apprentissage, c'est quoi ça? Comment ça se produit une démarche pédagogique? Alors, afin de réaliser la vision, il faut que notre pédagogie soit à jour et ceci sousentend une formation continue pour les gens qui sont intervenants premiers.

Implementing the projet éducatif. Another issue identified by participants relates to the notion of implementing programs conceived and designed for the francophone student. Apart from the more technical difficulties associated with programs of studies, resources, and the relatively small numbers of students province-wide, participants identified the lack of a framework for the full implementation of francophone programs as a major underlying issue facing francophone education. On this issue, participants expressed grave concerns with applying French immersion or regular program regulations to the francophone programs. An example of such a regulation applied to francophone programs relates to teaching of English Language Arts in the francophone programs. One participant shared these understandings on the issue.

> On a au ministère d'éducation un règlement qui s'appelle 'The French Language Immersion Regulation' qui dit qu'en troisième année que tu dois introduire l'Anglais. Ça s'appelle 'The French Language Immersion Regulation.' Il n'y a pas de politique ni de règlement au ministère qui traite du nombre de minutes, de la meilleure façon de, ou le meilleur temps d'introduire l'anglais dans les écoles francophones. Et puis même, il n'y a rien qui traite de toute la pédagogie pour les Francophones. Je suppose qu'on est trop, trop occupé à autres choses. Mais, je sais que je me suis déjà fait dire par certaines personnes assez bien placées au ministère qui se demandent vraiment si la Cour... Comme si on disait qu'on ne voulait pas avoir l'anglais en troisième année, on veut seulement commencer en quatrième année, ils ne pourraient pas nous empêcher. Il n'y a rien qui démontre qu'il faut que ce soit en troisième année.

Student evaluation. Another issue which was raised by participants relates to the evaluation of students and the use of student results to monitor program effectiveness. One participant expressed concern with this practice especially given the relative newness of these programs. He expressed this in the following way.

> Un autre défi est que le contexte albertain nous force de pouvoir démontrer de façon tangible et concrète que les programmes qui sont offerts dans nos écoles sont des programmes de qualités qui donnent des résultats très, très élevés. Puis, ce n'est pas évident par le fait même que les conseils existent seulement depuis deux ou trois ans. Ça prend toujours un certain nombre d'années, d'expériences, pour pouvoir montrer ces données-là.

In more specific terms, participants expressed concerns with Alberta Education's achievement testing program. Several participants shared examples of how this program was essentially a monitoring system designed for the majority and applied to all students regardless of program outcomes. One participant shared her concerns with this practice in the following.

> Quand je vois des résultats des 'Grade Three Achievement Tests' puis comment on compare dans English Language Arts, bien, on ne compare pas très bien. Ce n'est pas surprenant! Nos jeunes sont francophones et pour une grande partie d'eux, l'anglais est une langue seconde. En plus, nous dans nos systèmes, on commence à l'enseigner en troisième. Alors, c'est évident que les nôtres ne comparent pas très bien. Puis, ensuite il faut faire des excuses et les parents n'acceptent pas ça, des excuses. Alors, ce achievement testing program nuit vraiment nos efforts comme conseil scolaire.

Leadership

Participants in this study talked a lot about the issue of leadership. In sharing their understandings on this issue, participants talked about leadership in more generic terms as well as leadership at the school level.

Overall leadership. In several instances, participants tended to talk about leadership in more general terms, sharing overall impressions rather than talk about leadership in specific situations or contexts. The first of these impressions shared was that there appears to be a lack of overall leadership in the province unifying the efforts and fostering the effectiveness of the structures which are in place. In describing the leadership in some of these formal structures, one participant had the following to say. "Ah oui, il y a toute une structure. La structure formelle est en place. Mais, tu pourrais parler de toutes les structures au monde. À un moment donné, s'il n'y a pas la volonté derrière ça, tu n'avances pas." On this same issue, another participant added the following.

> Tu sais, moi je travaille pour avancer le projet de l'éducation française ici dans mon petit coin de la province et puis un autre fait la même chose dans son petit coin et ainsi de suite. Mais, il faut qu'on soit capable de se rencontrer à un moment donné. Qu'on gère des projets d'écoles françaises puis qu'on ne soit pas capable juste d'échanger qu'est-ce qu'on vit chacun dans nos coins, moi je n'y crois pas! Il faudrait à un moment donné qu'on

ait un leadership qui nous rejoigne afin qu'on puisse profiter de l'expertise de la collectivité et de réaliser sa vision commune. Mais, tu vois, ce leadership n'y est pas dans toute l'infrastructure qu'on a établie jusqu'à date. Alors, ceci nous manque et il va falloir qu'on s'en parle. Mais, à qui on parle?

Another issue identified in the area of leadership relates to the lack of individuals with the required abilities and desire to assume leadership roles. In raising this issue, one participant had the following to say.

> We don't have a very large pool to draw from. When you take for example, school boards. In the English community, it is the total eligible population that could potentially run for trustee. But, if you have a very small pool like we do in the francophone community, you end up by having the same half dozen people in small communities becoming trustees as well as assuming the leadership roles in many of the organizations serving the francophone community. What happens 10 years down the road when all the people interested and concerned have run for election and held these leadership positions and they want a rest? What do you do? How do you renew that?

A third area of concern raised is the influence that language has in selecting leaders in the francophone community. According to one participant in particular, the community expectations are such that its leaders must be proficient in the French language and because of the toll that assimilation has had on the population, few individuals have the required language skills to assume leadership positions with confidence in the community. She expressed this in these terms.

> C'est toujours les mêmes qui vont s'impliquer dans la communauté, qui ont la confiance nécéssaire pour s'impliquer. Et, ça prend des leaders encore dans la communauté; des leaders qui savent qu'ils sont bons. Mais, souvent les gens ont un complexe de minoritaire. S'ils ne sont pas habitués à parler en français puis ils savent que leur français est rond puis plein d'erreurs, ou bien s'ils ne peuvent pas écrire en français, ils ne seront pas inclinés à poursuivre des postes de leadership parce que premièrement, ils n'ont pas la confiance en eux et deuxièmement, la communauté ne leur fera pas confiance à cause de leur français.

School leadership. In talking about leadership, participants shared many concerns with this issue at the school level. The first issue to be raised was that the recent restructuring in education which imposed a site-based management model on schools resulted in the redefining of roles in school administration. One participant described this phenomenon in the following way.

> La restructuration de M. Klein avec son site-based management, c'est bien beau. Mais, à un moment donné, il faut refaire toute ton organisation à l'interne. Cette année je réalise que mes secrétaires ne seront plus des secrétaires. Mon adjointe ne sera plus juste une adjointe. Il faut penser nos rôles différemment. Une directrice d'école ne sera peut-être plus la directrice d'école. Elle sera peut-être le leader de la pédagogie pour entraîner les élèves et la communauté dans l'orientation de notre projet éducatif. Puis, de là on aura un administrateur d'école pour le budget, transport, et tout ce que tu veux. Alors, je suis juste en train de faire ces changements, de nourrir cette nouvelle conception des rôles mais je réalise une chose; qu'on ne peut pas s'attendre à ce qu'ils vont additionner des postes. C'est à nous de voir les choses différemment.

Although the recent restructuring of education in Alberta has led to the redefining of the many leadership roles within the management of schools, it appears that the expectations individuals have of these roles vary somewhat and are subject to negotiation. For example, there appeared to be confusion with participants in more than one jurisdiction with respect to who should be directly involved with the issue of policy development. One participant described this confusion and varying expectations in the following passage.

> Mais, ce qui arrive dans d'autres conseils scolaires, les secrétaires-trésoriers n'ont pas été impliqués dans le développement de politiques. Alors, quand notre nouveau directeur général est entré en fonction, il m'a dit très clairement que de faire des politiques ne faisait pas partie de mon rôle. Alors, moi je me suis dit que ça me donnerait plus de temps pour faire d'autres choses. Mais, le lendemain, il m'arrive en me demandant d'élaborer une politique au sujet d'une telle affaire. Alors, ce qui arrive, je crois, c'est qu'une fois qu'on connait la personne, on sait où sont leurs compétences et puis on les exploite.

Related to the issue of the recent restructuring, an observation was made that the emerging leadership tended to be closer to the students being served and consequently more effective. She conveyed this belief in the following passage.

> Il faut que le leadership soit inspiré des gens de la base. Quand nous comme leaders on a l'attitude des élèves, des parents, puis de l'équipe de travail, bien, c'est là qu'elle se fait la différence. C'est certain que d'après mon point de vue, les gens au ministère n'aimeraient pas ça. Mais, moi je crois qu'on alimente beaucoup plus par le haut que le haut peut alimenter le bas. C'est avec nous qui se passe l'action.

The perceived necessity to become more closely involved with the schools was also noted by several participants whose leadership positions were not in the schools. In discussing this perceived necessity, one participant described it as a means of gathering data which would give him the tools and insights necessary to develop meaningful policies. In addition, by being more visible, this individual also realized that communication between himself and teachers improved. The following passage illustrates this.

> Il y a une chose qui arrive quand je mets les pieds dans les écoles. Ça arrive chaque fois! Quelqu'un m'arrive puis me dit: 'Eh, j'étais juste pour t'appeller. J'étais juste pour t'appeller! Ah, puis j'étais juste pour t'envoyer une télécopie. Je peux tu juste te le donner?' C'est vrai qu'il était pour le faire, mais, il ne l'aurait pas fait. Donc, quand tu es présent, bien, ça se dit, ça. C'est plus naturel quand les gens te voient.

The presence of senior administrators at community functions was also perceived to be very important. One participant felt that their presence legitimized the importance of certain activities and felt that if schools wanted the support of the community, it was important for school officials to reciprocate this support. He expressed this in the following passage.

> Ma présence et mon exemple est autrement plus important que ma parole. Aujourd'hui tu prends le temps de m'écouter. Généralement, les gens n'ont pas le temps de m'écouter parce que je ne suis pas plus important qu'un autre. Mais, je suis important quand je suis présent. Que je parle ou que je ne parle pas, ce n'est pas important. C'est important que j'étais a l'assemblé annuel de l'A.C.F.A. régionale l'autre jour. Le Bal aux beans, you bet! Le Carnaval à la Faculté Saint-Jean l'autre jour aussi. Même si je n'ai pas

besoin de parler. Parce que les gens disent: 'Si lui il est là, ça doit être parce que c'est important.' C'est important pour eux que, disons quelqu'un comme le surintendent sois là. Ça légitimise leurs efforts et, de ma part, je réalise l'importance que je sois là.

Regardless of all the various leaders involved in francophone schools, it appeared that the principalship was the position which held the most potential influence. One participant expressed this in the following terms.

> La plus grande influence, d'après moi, c'est encore les directeurs d'écoles. Ultimately, that's where it lies. Si tu as un bon directeur d'école qui a une bonne vision, qui s'adonne bien avec son monde, il sait où il s'en va, c'est là qu'elle est l'influence. Tout le reste devient secondaire. Une bonne direction d'école qui a son personnel derrière lui ou elle, et qui l'appui-là de, par exemple une personne comme moi, il peut aller très loin.

Although participants tended to agree with the notion that the principalship was a key position, some concerns were expressed with the individuals currently in these positions. In the first instance, participants noted that a significant number of principals in these newly established francophone school jurisdictions were new to the position and had little or no previous experience in the role of principal. In addition to this, it was noted that individuals currently serving as principals, by and large had no previous experiences in secondary school and program administration, and that this tended to have a negative impact on establishing credible schools and credible secondary programs within these schools.

The last issue to be raised relating to the principalship was the difficulty senior administrators were experiencing in bringing the collectivity together in terms of a common vision. The most commonly cited barriers to this challenge included such factors as the relatively small numbers involved, distance, and lack of support. While addressing this issue, one participant expressed her frustration in attempting to create a structure whereby principals of francophone schools could network and meet three of four times yearly to discuss common issues and ultimately develop a common vision for these schools. However, after many attempts in establishing such an organization, she put her efforts aside due to a lack of support from key stakeholders such as the Alberta Teachers' Association and Alberta Education. It is interesting to note that on this issue, a participant

who is a senior official observed that he himself could only be as effective as the collectivity of principals would permit him to be. He expressed this in these terms.

> De nos jours, on ne parle plus de leadership charismatique, on parle de leadership collectif. Moi, je ne peux rien faire tout seul. J'ai du leadership quand mes directions d'écoles disent: 'We're right behind you! We're on your heels.' Là on est correct. Mais, se réunir devant tout le monde qui sort de là puis ils ne sont pas d'accord avec moi, ce n'est pas du leadership, ça. C'est une espèce de présence physique temporaire.

Effecting change. Given the positions that leaders involved with francophone schooling hold, bringing about change and improving schools and offering programs remain a major challenge. In describing how she brings about change for her students, one participant described how she must ask for the proverbial mile to advance an inch. She describes this in the following passage.

> Quelqu'un me dit l'autre jours: 'Toi, tu vois toujours là'! 'Oui!' mais j'ai dit: 'Il faut viser là, pour avoir ça! Si je vise juste ça parce que la loi albertaine me dit c'est ça, puis il n'y a pas plus de programmes, bien, on va juste avoir ça. Je suis aussi bien de viser là puis que l'on va atteindre au moins quelque chose de potable.

Although it is possible to bring about change and improve the overall educational services provided to francophone students in these newly established school jurisdictions, there is a cost involved. Several participants noted that to obtain minimal levels of services required immeasurable amounts of work, lobbying, and energy. Add to this the fact that the francophone population in Alberta is relatively small and it does not take long before the work takes its toll on its leaders. One participant shared this personal experience.

> Tu sais, moi comme leader en éducation, j'ai vécu un épuisement il y a quelques années. Puis, des fois je l'ai aussi à l'égard des directions générales. Je l'ai beaucoup à l'égard des directions d'écoles et des enseignants. Mais, là je vois des petites pointes de lueurs, des petites potentialisations. Là je vous dis: 'On part.' Mais, ça prend beaucoup, beaucoup d'énergie.

Resources

The third issue to be identified by the 12 participants relates to the area of resources. When talking about this issue, participants tended to focus on three areas. These are funding, working together to maximize limited resources, and the expected contributions of stakeholders.

Funding

When discussing the issue of funding, participants acknowledged that the establishment of autonomous francophone school jurisdictions and coordinating councils incurred additional costs. In looking more closely at the issue, participants shared their views on the notion of equity, funding sources, and how best to invest available funding.

Equity. When looking at the first issue relating to the levels of additional funding required, one participant shared a certain frustration with the current levels of funding. Although much had been done to date, it is still very difficult for schools to offer the breadth of programs and courses required by students. In addition to this, she expressed a certain frustration with the lack of program materials and program support available from Alberta Education. The following passage summarizes her views on the issue.

> Quand moi je dis au ministère que j'ai un jeune qui a de la difficulté puis qu'il a besoin de Sciences 14, ce n'est pas juste une directrice qui demande un petit caprice. J'ai un jeune qui a droit à une éducation de qualité. Donc, j'ai besoin d'outils. J'ai besoin de guide. Parce que là, si je dis à un enseignant que je lui confie tel élève pour 10 mois puis qu'il a la responsabilité de le mettre dans un processus d'apprentissage et qu'au bout, je veux voir une réussite scolaire, mais c'est certain que j'ai besoin d'appui. Depuis l'émergence de l'école française, il y a eu énormément de fait. Mais, tu sais, tout ce qui a été fait, c'est toujours....ce n'est que la base. On a juste à regarder ce qui existe dans le système anglophone et on voit que ce n'est pas parallèle du tout. Alors, à un moment donné on dit: 'Donnez-nous donc juste de l'équité puis on n'aura plus à vous dire qu'il nous manque encore ça!'

On this same issue relating to the level of funding made available, several other participants shared the belief that inadequate levels of funding were being made available for francophone schooling. These participants noted that with the restructuring in education

that occurred in 1994, the funding mechanism changed in such a way that funding levels were generally determined by the number of students being served. It is believed that this new method does not allow boards to generate enough provincial funding to meet the diverse needs of these students. In addition to this, participants shared a certain frustrationwith the way in which this new funding framework was implemented. Participants were quick to note that when this funding system was implemented, francophone schools did not have equivalent resources and equitable infrastructure to the majority boards: public and separate. One participant shared these observations with respect to the monumental task at hand.

> Alors, si on considèrere pour un instant la tâche devant nous, j'espère qu'il n'y avait pas du monde assez, je vais essayer d'être poli, mais d'avoir tellement d'illusion de croire que nous, on allait changer le monde dans cinq ans en partant de zéro, c'est à dire d'enrayer l'assimilation. Alors, si le Fédéral retire son appui financier, on va avoir des problèmes; on va avoir des problèmes sérieux.

Federal funding. When the Federal government passed legislation declaring Canada a bilingual country in February of 1969, funding was immediately made available for those provinces which would help Ottawa realize this federal initiative. For Alberta, this meant that the federal government made funding available for the implementation of French language programs. These included the more traditional French second language courses offered in schools as well as the emerging French immersion programs.

In the first years, funding for these programs was done on a yearly basis. Soon thereafter, the Federal government entered into agreements with participating provinces. These agreements, more commonly referred to as the Bilateral Agreements for the Official Languages in Education, served as the funding structure through which Alberta and other participating provinces received funding for the additional costs incurred in providing these programs. Alberta Education received funding for such costs as program expansion and development, library expansion, and infrastructure support in terms of a negotiated amount usually determined by a particular formula. The province in turn directed some of this funding to those school jurisdictions which were offering French language programs. Although these programs were initially embraced by the francophone community, the community soon decided that they did not meet the needs of the francophone student. After many years of lobbying and great effort on behalf of its members, the community did eventually establish, as we have seen, its own schools and eventually its own jurisdictions.

The federal government, recognizing the importance of these minority language schools for the country, was again ready to provide some funding.

Funding for minority language schooling in Alberta coincided with the restructuring of education which occurred in 1994. The province knew that along with the sweeping changes to education, it was going to establish seven autonomous francophone school authorities. Just before establishing these boards, Alberta Education entered into a separate agreement with the federal government to get some financial assistance in place to establish and implement a model of governance for these autonomous francophone schools. The agreement was negotiated to span a five year period beginning in 1994 and ending in 1999. Funding made available through this agreement for basic education is intended to assist the province to establish a governance structure for francophone schooling, to build the required school buildings for minority students, and to develop the required programs of studies and accompanying support materials. Although the 12 participants for this study generally believe that these funds are necessary, not all agree as to how these funds are being invested.

Of the three initiatives funded, the one causing the most concern relates to the governance structure which was implemented and to which the francophone community had grown accustomed. On the one hand, some participants described the importance of the structure and furthermore, are already getting ready to pressure the provincial and federal governments to maintain the current levels of funding to support the administrative structure which has been established. One participant expressed this in these terms.

> Les argents qu'on reçoit des ententes sont très très importants. Nos conseils ont vraiment besoin des fonds qui nous viennent sous ces ententes, surtout si on veut survivre de la même façon dont on est tout de suite. En premier temps, pour nous ça veut dire des postes et des supports dont on a vraiment besoin pour s'assurer que la gestion continue. Par exemple, nous ne pouvons pas payer trois postes de direction générale avec les inscriptions comme elles le sont. Alors, avec les argents venant de l'entente, on peut se le permettre. Ou bien, un autre exemple, c'est qu'on a les services d'une conseillère excellente deux jours par semaine. C'est vraiment superbe, mais c'est la priorité du conseil scolaire puis de l'école. Alors, ça va être très important de faire certain que c'est bien compris où ces fonds-là vont puis comment on en a besoin pour nos jeunes. Donc, le dossier de l'entente est très important, surtout cette année.

Another participant shared a different set of understandings with respect to the way federal funds were being used. He had the following to say.

> Alors, moi je ne suis pas d'accord avec la structure administrative que l'on a mis sur place. Maintenant, je suis encore moins d'accord comme administrateur quand je regarde les sous. Quand je calcule vite, si on n'avait pas les argents du fédéral, on n'aurait plus de conseillers pédagogiques, plus de coordinatrice pour le transport, on perdrait une secrétaire, et puis moi puis notre secrétaire-trésorière, on tomberait à temps-partiel. Là, on serait correct. On peut vivre avec un maximum de 6% pour les coûts de gestion. Mais, il faudrait faire ce que je viens de te dire. Puis, nous autres, on a 1 100 jeunes!!! Ils n'en n'ont que 240 dans un autre conseil scolaire et puis ça fait depuis cinq ans que leurs nombres descendent! Puis, ils ont une secrétaire, ils ont une secrétaire-trésorière, ils ont un surintendent avec un bureau, la photocopieuse... Ils vont à des conférences partout! Ils font partie de La Fédération... Il faut payer là-dedans! Tu sais, veux veux pas, on a créé une infrastructure administrative qui est beaucoup trop couteuse et qui ne reflète pas ce que les Francophones ont toujours fait, c'est à dire un modèle provincial. Ils ne reflètent pas du tout ce que la province avait demandé aux conseils scolaires de faire; de se regrouper. Je suis le seul à penser de même et quand j'essaie d'en parler aux deux autres conseils, ils ne veulent rien savoir. C'est comme s'ils ont une peur terrible parce que tout le monde veut défendre son territoire et dans le fond, ils ne défendent pas leur territoire, ils défendent leur job. Let's be honest!

In looking at the future of federal funding, again opinions were varied. Some participants suggested that the community would unite its efforts to ensure that a second agreement be negotiated to maintain the existing administrative structure. However, key participants in this study who have direct involvement in negotiating these agreements seemed to have different views. One individual shared the following with respect to the next agreement.

> Dans la deuxième entente on va vouloir concentrer davantage sur le contenu, c'est à dire l'éducation. En autres mots, que ce soit la maternelle à temps-plein, qui est une bonne idée de recrutement, que ce soit l'éducation à distance pour favoriser l'offre d'une variété de programmes, c'est là que les ressources devront aller. On a trois conseils scolaires et trois conseils de

> coordination. Alors, il faut faire attention comment on déploie nos ressources au niveau de la gestion.

On this same issue, another participant expressed his views in the following terms.

> Another issue that they are dealing with is the establishment of the three school boards and three coordinating councils. At the present time with federal funds, there is the ability to operate three boards and three coordinating councils. But, that is quite a cost in terms of infrastructure. So, the issue is should they become one? Across the whole country, we are reducing the number of boards, so, this certainly has to be brought to the floor. The whole question of the federal involvement is as an initial amount of money to assist the province in doing the job that it is supposed to do by the constitution. So, eventually the federal government will want to pull out of that. They are there to assist in getting it going. They are not there to implement and deliver those programs.

Provincial funding. When the province reformed the administrative structure in 1994, the very nature of the way education was funded changed as well. Prior to 1994, residency was a key factor in determining how much funding a student generated as well as who controlled the funding generated. The situation which developed in Saint Isidore was directly a result of the funding mechanism which was in place prior to the reforms announced in 1994.

Although Bill 8 brought many changes to education, the more significant changes for the francophone community were the creation of the seven Francophone Education Regional Authorities and the way in which funding was to be collected and distributed. By assuming responsibility for the collection of funds, the province also assumed responsibility for distributing these and the preferred method was to see the dollars follow the student. In this way, parents were vested with the ability to choose a school which best met their children's needs, and in so doing the province also transferred the constitutional responsibility to the Francophone Education Regional Authorities and the parents. Should a demand for a francophone school be identified, it became the responsibility of the francophone authority to determine whether the numbers warranted to provide the service requested. Providing services with essentially the same levels of funding and expenditure framework provided majority boards presented some difficulty.

The major objection relates to the notion that formula driven funding and spending is fine so long as all players begin on the same field. In the case of francophone schools, most of these authorities began with nothing. It would appear unrealistic to expect that these authorities, with little or no resources and history, to immediately begin to compete for students. One participant expressed this sentiment in the following way.

> Eux partent du principe qu'on est un conseil public, so run it like everybody else. Je reviens à mon analogie de l'enfant de deux ans et demi. Ça prend plus que deux ans et demi. Ça va prendre peut-être jusqu'à 18 ans. Peut-être qu'on va avoir besoin de l'aide pas seulement du fédéral, mais de la province. Peut-être que they owe us also? Ça fait longtemps qu'on paie des taxes. Mes ancêtres sont arrivés en 1902. Peut-être qu'ils nous doivent un petit peu plus que de dire qu'on est comme tout le monde. Six pour cent pour la gestion du conseil, c'est bon. Ça c'est de la m----. Ce n'est pas assez! On ne sera pas capable. Puis, si on n'a pas d'aide ni du fédéral ni de la province, le projet de la gestion scolaire est très menacé.

Funding was a major concern with these newly established francophone school jurisdictions. It is evident that provincial funding is inadequate given the monumental task of providing a quality education to a very small and sparsely populated group. Although additional funding is being provided by the federal government to assist these jurisdictions, the temporary nature of this funding along with the different views on how these funds might best be used was the cause of some anxiety among study participants.

Working Together to Maximize Limited Resources

The administrative structure which was implemented in 1994 to address the governance of francophone schools ensures that all section 23 parents are served by a structure which was established to recognize their rights outlined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The governance model which was selected ensures that all parts of the province are governed by one of the seven regional francophone authorities established. By implementing such a governance model, Alberta has in effect transferred the issue of "where numbers warrant" to the francophone community itself. However, with the funding structure which was also implemented at this same time, the francophone community is being forced to reconsider some of the ways it has chosen to invest the resources it has received to date in order to maximize their returns.

The first observation shared relates to the issue of duplication of services. It was noted on many occasions that the number of students in each of the three Authorities operating schools does not justify the need to have the services of three complete full-time central office staff complements. One participant shared the following observation on this issue.

> Selon moi, les conseils scolaires vont sans doute discuter de la possibilité de collaborer dans certains domaines sans être obligés de changer la structure actuelle de la gestion. In n'y a rien qui empêche qu'il pourrait avoir un secrétaire-trésorier pour les trois conseils; qu'un conseil scolaire soit responsable pour faire la paie. Une fois que toutes les données sont toutes là avec les dépots électroniques et toute la technologie, ce n'est pas évident de faire ça trois fois pour trois conseils scolaires.

Still on the issue of duplication of services, many participants shared the notion that during the initial three years, these newly established school jurisdictions invested too heavily in the area of administration. Many participants suggested that investing in this domain might in itself hinder the overall long-term development of quality programs for students. One participant expressed this notion in these terms.

> On peut se donner trop de structures. We can over democratize. On s'est donné une structure qui est trop coûteuse au niveau administratif et qui nous empêche de prendre des pas d'avancement au niveau administratif comme on devrait. Il faut avancer. Il faut encore aller à la septième, aller à la huitième, à la neuvième dans des écoles. C'est sûr qu'il y a beaucoup de travail à faire, mais, on n'a jamais assez d'argent. Je veux dire trois surintendents et trois secrétaires-trésoriers, des comptes de dépenses, des commissaires qui vont à des conférences.

Another issue raised relates to the numbers involved. Participants noted that because of the small number of students being served in the three Authorities operating schools, the professional staff really had little opportunity to collaborate with colleagues with similar assignments. One participant in particular believes that by sharing one's expertise, an individual develops a sense of being valued. It would appear, therefore, that with the current structure, the professional staff may be deprived of the few genuine opportunities which might foster this kind of professional growth. He expressed it in these terms.

> On a besoin d'une structure qui favoriserait le partage entre professionnels. Quand tu veux valoriser tes professionnels, ce n'est pas juste au niveau monétaire; c'est aussi au niveau de la satisfaction de savoir qu'il peut partager avec d'autres. Quant à moi, un professeur pourrait se sentir valorisé s'il pouvait partager un projet qu'il tient à coeur. En le partageant, il aide ses collègues et en même temps, il peut s'améliorer. Moi, ce que j'applique aux écoles, c'est exactement ce qui se passe dans l'industrie.

The administrative structure which is currently in place has evolved in part because it reflected the wishes of the francophone community and also because funding was made available to permit its establishment. However, it appears that the funding that allowed for the establishment of this administrative structure came in large part from the federal government. Although many participants expressed the need for its continuance, some were more resigned to the notion that changes to the way in which limited funding had to be allocated were forthcoming. One participant expressed this in these terms.

> Une fois que l'argent du fédéral va être parti, comment est-ce qu'on va vivre? Est-ce qu'on peut continuer à envisager les mêmes structures, les mêmes infrastructures? Au niveau de notre conseil scolaire, est-ce qu'on peut se payer des services pédagogiques, du développement de promotion et de recrutement, et ainsi de suite? La réponse est claire. Si l'entente et les argents-là disparaissent, tout ça disparait! Ma préoccupation par rapport à ça c'est que les conseils en général ne veulent pas vraiment entendre parler de ça. La seule solution, d'après moi, c'est qu'à un moment donné il va falloir un regroupement de services et de structures pour contrer ça.

Changing the existing administrative structure appears to be an issue which will receive much attention in the next few years; especially in light of the upcoming renegotiation of the federal funding agreement. It will be interesting to see, however, if changes do occur, whether these changes will come voluntarily from within the community or whether they will be a result of external pressures to do so. In discussing this issue, one participant alluded to the fact that it might be easier for all parties concerned if the impetus for change did indeed come from external forces. He referred to an administrative structure in Saskatchewan to describe how we might better deploy financial resources to meet some of our needs. He also noted, however, that the funding framework itself determines the scope of services provided and also the level of collaboration enjoyed among stakeholders. On this he shared the following.

> On pourrait établir des services collectifs et partagés. Mais, ça serait beaucoup plus facile à les établir si les octrois étaient cernés juste pour ça. Actuellement, il n'y a rien qui nous empêche de le faire, cependant, il faut le financer. Puis, c'est à même les budgets. Alors, si on recevait une somme substantielle comme ils reçoivent en Saskatchewan pour des services collectifs et partagés, c'est sûr que ça serait beaucoup plus facile à établir et ça éviterait beaucoup de tiraillement dans la communauté franco-albertaine.

Not all participants were optimistic, however, that the pressure to reallocate limited resources would come from external sources. Many participants expressed concerns with the thought of downsizing the recently implemented administrative structure. On this issue, one participant shared the following thoughts.

> Je commence à croire moins que le fédéral va nous obliger de modifier nos structures administratives. Ils vont nous dire: 'Écoutez, nous on vous donne tant d'argent pour l'education francophone en Alberta. On ne veut pas se mêler de vos particularités.' Évidemment, ils ne l'ont pas fait dans les autres provinces. En Alberta, that's a time bomb. Alors, le dernier message qu'on a présentement, c'est que non, ils ne nous le demanderont pas. Ils ne le feront pas. Mais, cependant, le fédéral nous ferait peut-être une faveur s'il nous l'exigeait. Présentement je ne connais personne dans la structure administrative qui serait prêt à sacrifier son poste pour le bien de la collectivité.

The common understanding among many participants is that something has to be done to the administrative structure in order to ensure that francophone schools use resources more responsibly. Several means to accomplishing this were suggested by participants. One way of achieving this is to move toward a sort of funding agreement where specific outcomes are well defined and agreed upon at the onset and the degree to which these outcomes have been achieved can be measured. In discussing this more business like approach, one participant had the following to say.

> We've approached the province to look at how federal dollars were being used and I believe that will be the approach right across the country for special agreements for minority language education. We will go the business plan approach which means we will ask them to identify the objectives and the results they want to achieve and where monies are going

to be spent. And then, there is an accountability mechanism at the end of that agreement. And, every year, as we go through a business plan, you find out if you have achieved the objectives. If you haven't, then you've got to find a way to adjust and it also has to be transparent to the public. The federal government was always concerned about the monies that went into these particular agreements where there was little or no accountability. Historically, they were simply based on the number of students.

In looking at the different options available to address the issue of maximizing the use of limited resources, most participants tended to favour looking at possible ways to merge administrative structures currently in place. One participant expressed this notion in these terms.

> Tu sais, on a trois directeurs généraux et trois secrétaires-trésoriers qui tiennent fortement à leurs postes. Alors, ils vont apporter des arguments pour convaincre leur conseil scolaire qu'ils ne sont pas prêts à partager des services. Puis, ça peut être encore une façon de protéger leur poste. Mais, même à ça, il y a une chose qu'il faut faire. Il faut regarder à des façons de travailler ensemble. Il faut travailler vers le jour où on peut tous travailler ensemble; avoir vraiment une administration ou même un conseil scolaire francophone dans la province. Je veux dire, on fait tous les trois la même chose. On cherche tous les trois des orthophonistes, on cherche tous les trois des psychologues francophones, on cherche tous les trois à avoir des ateliers en français pour nos enseignants. Alors, au lieu d'avoir trois personnes à battre le cheval, il n'y en aurait rien qu'un. Puis, ça se ferait tout en concert parce qu'on a quand même tous les mêmes intérêts.

The notion of working together to maximize resources was not limited to those organizations within the province. Many participants recognized that when looking at minority language education, much could be gained by working and collaborating with stakeholders in other provinces and territories. One participant shared these understandings on the issue.

> On doit maintenir des liens étroits avec les organismes et nos collègues dans les autres provinces et territoires pour pouvoir bénéficier de leur expérience et aussi de partager les activités et les initiatives qu'on voudrait entreprendre pour surmonter nos défis communs. Pour nous c'est très important parce

qu'on a tous des petites clientèles et travailler ensemble nous permettrait de faire plus de choses sans répéter la même chose six fois dans chacune des provinces.

In the end, most participants tended to suggest that the governance structure established to manage and administer Alberta's francophone schools might be excessive. These participants favoured a review of the existing structure with the view to proposing changes which would address the issue of duplication of services thereby freeing resources which might better be invested elsewhere. Some participants, however, questioned the basis on which the current levels of funding for minority language education were determined. At the provincial level, they questioned the fairness of expecting jurisdictions to repair the ravages of over a century of assimilation with no significant additional funding. At the national level, they questioned on what research current levels of federal funding had been determined. These participants tended to advocate a more cautious approach to complying with the current trend of restructuring organizations with the view to reducing costs while not adversely affecting results. Participants also identified the following areas which required the coming together of the many stakeholders in order to improve the level of services provided to francophone students.

The Pan-Canadian Project. This national initiative is one where provinces contribute their expertise toward developing a common framework of science learning outcomes for kindergarten through grade 12. The framework identifies general and specific learner outcomes for skills, knowledge and science, technology, society, and environment. Once completed, the framework can be used by individual provinces to guide the future development of their respective programs of studies. One participant shared the following thoughts on this initiative.

> On ne peut pas y arriver tout seul. Je crois qu'on va arriver à se rapprocher de la pleine gamme de la réponse à tous ces domaines-là par rapport à l'éducation française dans la mesure où on va se donner une programmation, des outils, des ressources pan-canadiens; des programmes pan-canadiens. Autrement, on va avoir trop de limites dans nos ressources humaines et financières. Même si on avait plus de ressources financières, ce n'est pas évident qu'on a les ressources humaines formées pour le faire. Puis, même si on va tout chercher notre meilleur monde dans toutes nos écoles, pour faire le travail au niveau de la programmation et du développement de ressources, ce n'est pas mieux au niveau de la pratique.

> Alors, je crois que la façon la plus efficace d'y arriver c'est par une programmation pan-canadienne.

A provincial consortium. Although participants expressed many concerns with respect to the high costs of maintaining the current governance structure, participants also noted that some support structures were established to assist school jurisdictions with the task of governing and managing schools. One of these structures mentioned was the regional consortia which, according to participants' understandings, are essentially organizations which provides support services to schools jurisdictions within a given region. Services provided include workshops for teachers and administrators as well as consulting services for jurisdictions served. However, services provided by these consortia are offered in English and are perceived not to serve the needs of educators working in francophone school jurisdictions. Although francophone boards have asked for their own consortium, their request was refused and they were directed to avail themselves of the services provided by existing consortia. Participants were quick to point out that this is an example of a service which exists for the majority and where no compensation is being provided to these francophone jurisdictions which would enable them to provide an equitable service.

Special needs. Another area often mentioned as problematic relates to the issue of providing adequate services to students with special needs. The first concern identified relates to the availability of specialists who can work in the French language. Since the establishment of these school jurisdictions, many services offered by specialists in such areas as speech therapy, behaviour disorders, and the many learning disabilities, are being sought in the French language. However, these jurisdictions are experiencing some difficulties in getting these services for francophone students and in many cases, even services provided by the provincial government, are not being provided in French. One participant expressed this in these terms.

> Un défi va être de mettre en place un système d'appui au niveau des autres ministères quand vient le temps de répondre aux besoins exceptionnels de certains élèves. Lorsqu'on parle de l'intégration des services à la jeunesse au niveau des trois ou quatre ministères impliqués, ce n'est pas évident que ces services-là sont disponibles en français.

La francisation. Parents who have section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms rights may not necessarily have the proficiency in French to be able to provide

their children with the language skills required to succeed in a francophone school. The challenge for these school jurisdictions is to provide these children with an early intervention program which will provide them with the required language proficiency to succeed in these jurisdictions. One participant shared these understandings on the issue.

> Un autre défi est certainement la question de francisation auprès des enfants qui nous arrivent à l'école de foyers là où on ne parle pas français ou seulement un parent le parle. Amener ces enfants-là à pouvoir améliorer leur niveau de compétences linguistiques pour pouvoir bien réussir à l'école est tout un défi. Je pense que le succès des programmes de francisation va beaucoup dépendre du succès des partenariats qu'on va créer entre la communauté, la famille, et l'école pour que l'enfant soit vraiment capable de parfaire ses compétence langagières tout au long de sa scolarité dans toutes sortes de milieux, dans toutes sortes de contextes.

Distance education. In Alberta, the Alberta Distance Learning Centre has provided distance education services. These services are intended primarily for students living in sparsely populated areas where the local course offerings may not meet students' needs. In these situations, students could access courses not offered locally through the distance education program operated from Barrhead, Alberta. However, management of this educational service has recently been transferred to a school jurisdiction and obtaining equitable services for francophone students is becoming a major concern. One participant expressed this in the following way.

> Un autre défi qui est peut-être un peu moins visible c'est l'éducation à distance. Ceux qui sont chargés de cette responsabilité n'ont pas encore assumer leur rôle comme ils le devraient. Ils ont un rôle de mettre sur pieds ou de développer des programmes pour l'éducation à distance puis assurer non seulement les programmes, mais faciliter toute l'éducation à distance en Alberta. Alors, ce n'est pas évident que le conseil scolaire qui vient d'en assumer la responsabilité comprenne son rôle ou veut comprendre son rôle. Alors, généralement, on n'est pas tellement satisfait de ce qui se passe à ce niveau-là.

Role of Stakeholders

In addition to stressing the importance of working together, participants in this study also emphasized the notion that the success of francophone schools was dependent

on the roles and responsibilities the various stakeholders assumed. The key stakeholders identified included the individual, the home, school employees, school councils, the school, the community, and the majority. The following is a description of the roles and responsibilities for the identified stakeholders and their contributions to the success of francophone schools.

The roles and responsibilities of the individual. The first stakeholder identified was the individual. In sharing their understandings of the role and responsibility of the individual, participants stressed the notion that the position held as a stakeholder was secondary to the conviction the individual held toward francophone schools. One participant best described the importance of the individual's commitment and beliefs in the following passage.

> Quand tu parles de structures, il faut que ça commence dans l'individu. Il faut que ça commence dans les croyances. Il faut que ça commence dans les convictions. Ça commence dans des attitudes parce que tu rentres dans un endroit où tu veux te mettre à l'écoute d'élèves, de parents, d'une communauté, et de gens d'entreprises. Si tu n'es pas bien situé ou si tu ne te connais pas dans tes tripes, je veux dire, tu t'en va là pour une job, ça devient très artificiel. Alors, à un moment donné, il faut que tu saches l'ensemble du mandat que ça représente. Alors, quant à moi, ça commence dans l'individu et c'est l'individu qui est le levin dans l'ensemble du projet éducatif.

Another participant shared a similar view with respect to the individual's role and responsibility. He stressed that living in a minority situation, it was important that individuals affirm themselves and that the survival of the language and the culture depended in part on the roles and responsibilities that individuals assumed. He expressed this in these terms.

> Alors, étant donné que les Francophones sont en minorité, il faut qu'ils affirment leur langue et leur culture. Ils sont obligés d'y travailler plus fort que quelqu'un qui fait partie de la majorité pour s'assurer que leur langue et leur culture ne disparaissent pas. Quand tu es en majorité, tu prends pour acquis que tout va continuer. Mais, lorsque tu es francophone, c'est important aussi et puis si tu veux t'assurer que tu maintiennes ta culture, il va falloir que comme individu, tu travailles pour.

The roles and responsibilities of the home. The second stakeholder to be identified was the home. When asked to share their understandings as to what was meant by home, participants tended to place more importance on the role that parents themselves played in transmitting both the French language and culture. Participants felt that it was important that the home and school both work toward the same shared goals; if not, the school would only serve to marginalize the student. One participant expressed this in this way.

> Il est essentiel que les familles et les foyers, les parents se donnent des moyens par rapport à leurs rôles au foyer. S'il n'y a pas de développement au foyer, l'école va juste marginaliser l'élève. Elle ne va pas l'intégrer. Alors, on a beaucoup à faire de se côté-là.

On the issue of parental involvement, participants also acknowledged the fact that for some families this represented more of a challenge than for others. In sharing his experiences as a francophone father married to an anglophone, one participant described the adjustments he had to make in the following passage.

> Je pense que l'important va être de bien communiquer aux parents qui ont des enfants qui ne parlent pas le fançais que eux ont un rôle à jouer par rapport à l'apprentissage et au perfectionnement du français de leur enfant. Je peux en parler un peu parce que j'ai vécu ce contexte parce que mon épouse ne parle pas français. Alors, les enfants ne le parlaient pas quand ils sont arrivés à l'école. Alors, il a fallu faire des ajustements dans notre vie familiale pour assurer que les enfants soient plus exposés au français, qu'ils étaient dans des situations où le français était utilisé, et ils devaient l'utiliser hors de l'école. À mon avis, on a assez bien réussi étant donné que nos enfants ont tous pu graduer de l'école francophone de la 12ième année avec leur diplôme.

When considering the linguistic and cultural proficiencies of parents, most participants recognized that children attending a francophone school do not come from a homogenous population. Linguistic and cultural proficiencies do vary from home to home. In light of this diversity, however, participants emphasized the importance of schools establishing positive working partnerships with all parents and that the school should assume a leadership role in giving parents the necessary strategies which will permit them to be full partners in the education of their children. Participants emphasized the importance

of establishing this partnership as the prerequisite to both parties succeeding in the education of the francophone community's children.

The roles and responsibilities of school employees. According to the understandings shared by participants, there was a certain expectation that school employees participate and assume leadership roles in community activities. Participants underlined the importance of being visible in the community and acknowledged that this represented an additional responsibility to what it means to be a teacher, administrator, or other school employee in a francophone school jurisdiction. However, given the limited number of employees, some participants stressed the notion that this aspect of an employee's responsibility had to be managed by the school's administration even though this meant managing time which was not within normal working hours. One participant expressed this in the following way.

> Donc, comme personnel de l'école, il faut être à un moment donné, présent partout. Donc, c'est de se dire que si toi tu vas à l'unité, puis toi tu vas à l'A.C.F.A., puis toi tu vas là... On se le répartit. Alors, chacun doit faire sa juste part et puis moi, je suis très vigilante de ce côté-là!

Although all participants tended to support this additional expectation of employees, they recognized that this added stress to the individual. One participant noted that when working in the francophone community, employees lost their sense of anonymity and that oftentimes, an employee's absence could be judged. One participant shared this anecdote to illustrate the point.

> Alors, comme employé, tu te sens obligé d'être visible. Alors, pour quelqu'un qui n'est pas habitué à travailler dans un tel contexte, ça peut être très fatigant, même stressant. Même moi, c'est mon emploi. Des fois je me sens visé, tu sais, des commentaires tels que: 'Je ne t'ai pas vu à l'affaire Paul Lamoureux! Ou encore, je ne t'ai pas vu au bistro l'autre soir!' Mais, whoa! 'Give me a break! Je m'en vais au show voir American President ou The English Patient.' Ça c'est ma vie personnelle. Mais, c'est stressant parce qu'on se sent toujours sous pression d'une obligation quelquonque.

When talking specifically about teachers as employees, participants expressed the concern that the teaching profession has suffered a loss of status in recent years. The implications for the francophone community is that without the necessary power vested in this profession, the influence that teachers actually have to meet individual student needs

and to promote the projet educatif in the community is somewhat limited. One participant expressed this in these terms.

> Un autre défi c'est de potentialiser les enseignants. Potentialiser les enseignants de sorte qu'ils prennent en main leurs responsabilités professionnelles, leurs croyances professionnelles, leur autonomie professionnelle pour créer un régime pédagogique conçu pour les enfants qu'ils ont entre les mains et d'être capable de faire valoir ce régime pédagogique auprès de tous les intervenants pour rassembler ceux-ci autour du potentiel particulier des élèves en milieu minoritaire.

The roles and responsibilities of school councils. Another stakeholder identified by participants in this study was the school council. The School Act amended in 1994 made the establishment of a school council mandatory for each school. Although the School Act specifies that these councils are to act in an advisory capacity, it appears that the challenge before these newly established francophone schools is such that the roles and expectations of these school councils is still being negotiated. One participant expressed this concern in the following way.

> Un autre défi c'est de déterminer le rôle des conseils d'école. Le fait que nos parents ont été obligés de revendiquer et de démontrer un intérêt pour avoir leurs écoles, ils sont plus impliqués dans l'enseignement de leur enfant. Ils veulent avoir un mot à dire dans tout! Alors, le défi c'est de définir les rôles sans les offusquer. Tu sais, on a élaboré une politique mais c'est de la communiquer, de la faire comprendre, et puis aussi de l'implanter. C'est un gros travail pour les directeurs d'écoles d'avoir ces bêtes-là qui les surveillent toujours mêmes s'ils ont de bonnes intentions.

The roles and responsibilities of the school. In talking about the roles and responsibilities of the school, participants shared many concerns. Their first expectation for the school is that the students perceive it as a good place to be. One participant described this requirement in the following way.

> Quant à moi, c'est très important que le jeune se sente bien dans une école puis qu'il ait le goût d'y être. Quand le jeune part de la maison et qu'il doit passer de 8:00 jusqu'à 16:00 à l'école, c'est important à un moment donné qu'il ait quelque chose de tangible et que ça soit agréable. Si ça ne l'est pas,

bien, ça peut devenir 10 mois d'enfer puis, il n'y a personne qui mérite ça. Alors, ceci est important de la maternelle jusqu'à la douzième année.

In talking specifically about the role of francophone schools, participants were more explicit. To begin with, participants stressed the important role that schools have in making students feel proud to be francophone and in affirming their identity in the context of the majority. In practical terms, this means that students will feel free to express themselves in French and also have the confidence to participate fully as members of the francophone culture. Viewed in this way, participants tended to suggest that schools have a major role to play in dealing with the issue of assimilation. Although many participants shared this understanding with respect to the role of francophone schools, this one participant expressed it best in the following way.

> En plus, l'école donne la fierté à l'étudiant de parler sa langue et de participer aux activités culturelles. C'est bien beau d'avoir quelqu'un qui peut bien parler et écrire, mais s'il n'est pas fier de parler sa langue, à quoi ça sert? Alors, l'école francophone promeut cet aspect-là; d'être fier de qui tu es sans imposant à tout le monde que tu es meilleur qu'eux parce qu'on ne l'est pas. C'est une question d'être fier de sa langue et de sa culture et puis lorsqu'on demande de participer, le jeune est prêt. Autrement dit, avec la base donnée par l'école et l'appui de la famille et de la communauté, le jeune va être prêt a combattre les forces de l'assimilation.

Another role that the school plays is in the creation of community. One participant described how the school itself was the vehicle for francophone children living in a minority situation to begin creating for themselves a francophone community. In addition, this participant suggested that the school provides the meeting place for parents and that this in itself provides the catalyst for francophone families to regroup themselves to create the notion of community. This participant expresses this in these terms.

> Je pense que l'école crée aussi communauté. Par le fait que les enfants sont regroupés à l'école, c'est de permettre des liens d'amitiés de se créer entre familles qui ne se connaitraient pas si ce n'était pas pour l'école francophone parce que leurs enfants seraient partout. Alors, c'est d'encourager des sleep-overs, puis les activités que les jeunes font, d'encourager autant que possible et que ces activités-là se font dans un contexte où ça peut se faire en français. Prenons par exemple des célébrations d'anniversaires. Si c'est des

élèves de la classe ou de l'école, bien ça peut se faire en français. C'est toutes ces petites possibilités-là qu'on oublie souvent, mais que si elles étaient apportées de l'avant, rendraient davantage significatif pour l'enfant l'apprentissage et le maintien de la langue.

From their descriptions, it appears that in the larger, more transient urban communities, the school assumes the role of the community centre more often than in the smaller rural centres. In describing the role the school played in developing the francophone community in his city, one participant underlined the importance the school played in bringing its members together. He described this role as follows.

> Tu sais, la cabane à sucre qui a eu lieu l'an dernier, c'est peut-être le seul rassemblement de la communauté qu'il y a eu. Maintenant, de cette façon, l'école fait partie de faire vivre la communauté. Alors, l'école devient le centre pour la communauté francophone.

Another expectation of the school which is changing is the way in which it is opening its doors to be more inclusive to its potential clientele. One participant shared these thoughts with respect to being more open to the diversity which makes up the francophone community and the role of the school in including all individuals who have rights under the Charter.

> Comme Francophones, si on était seulement capable d'inclure tous nos membres avec la richesse qui nous entoure, ça serait beau. Mettons qu'on disait aux jeunes qu'ils ont le droit d'être qui ils sont! Si pour un jeune son père est polonais puis il a épousé sa mère qui est francophone, c'est ça son bagage. Qu'il n'essaie pas de penser qu'il devrait être comme l'autre dans la classe que son père vient du Québec puis l'autre sa mère franco-ontarienne. Tu sais, des fois on veut trop chercher un moule. Dans les écoles française, il faut faire attention. Tu sais, plus on aura de diversité, plus on dira au jeune qu'il a le droit d'être qui il est dans tout ce qu'il est. Puis, c'est à nous de diversifier. Les premiers pas, c'est à nous à les faire. C'est nous les professionnels en éducation.

Somewhat related to the issue of diversity, one participant shared the belief that francophone schools must be sensitive to the reality that not all parents are proficient in the French language. In raising this issue, this participant shared the concern that there may exist situations where language used by school staff members might in fact serve to alienate

parents who are uncomfortable with their proficiency in the French language or may, in some cases, alienate some potential families altogether. This participant described an incident where a school held a meeting for its community and that before long, the meeting was carried out in English. Although the incident offended some Francophones in the community, this participant viewed the incident differently. She realized from the incident that not all parents are proficient in the French language and that even those who claim to be proficient, often cannot express their views as passionately in French as they can in English. To conclude her thoughts on the issue, she suggested that policy makers might be wise to be patient with this generation, referred to as the trial and error generation, and that hope lies in the next generation, the graduates of the present school system.

Another role and responsibility of autonomous francophone schools identified by participants was that of communicating the outcome of these schools as compared to the outcome of other French language programs and schools so that potential parents could make an informed decision when choosing a school. One participant said the following on this issue.

> Un des défis c'est certainement d'expliquer la raison d'être de nos écoles et puis que les gens puissent comprendre qu'ils ont une option. Ce n'est pas une option qui est forcée sur eux. Mais, s'ils croient que c'est important de maintenir et de soutenir leur langue et leur culture, l'option de l'école francophone homogène va leur donner ça.

The last role and responsibility of autonomous francophone schools mentioned relates to the issue of national unity. One participant shared his understanding that he felt it was important for the federal government to be able to demonstrate to Canadians that there were schools serving students belonging to either of Canada's official languages in all of the provinces and territories. He expressed this in the following way.

> C'est important que Ottawa puisse dire qu'il y a des écoles francophones dans les 10 provinces et deux territoires du Canada. Donc, on a un rôle à jouer qui est important au niveau de l'unité nationale.

The role of the community. The francophone community was identified by most participants as being a key stakeholder in the establishment and continued development of autonomous French minority language schooling. When asked to describe the francophone community's role with respect to the schools in question, one respondent suggested that at the moment, the school was really at the centre of the community's efforts, and as such,

was perceived as a vehicle by which the community realized its collective efforts and then used the result as an indicator of its success. He expressed this in these terms.

> À mon idée, la communauté est évidemment le rassemblement de gens qui se donnent des buts communs, qui travaillent ensemble, qui mettent ensemble leurs ressources pour en arriver à réussir ou réaliser les résultats qui ont véhiculé les valeurs. En ce moment, il me semble que le dossier des écoles francophones sert à rallier les gens de notre communauté autour du projet éducatif et qu'on est en train de mesurer nos succès collectifs par l'entremise du succès de celui-ci.

Although the community was identified as a key stakeholder in francophone schooling, several participants identified the business community as having a distinct role. These participants tended to view the involvement of the business community as important in two ways. The first role identified was that of providing students, especially in the senior years, with placements in the various practica of secondary school courses. One participant expressed this in the following passage.

> La chose qui est la plus difficile, à mon avis, du côté des conseils scolaires francophones, ce n'est pas d'établir un lien avec la communauté francophone. Ça c'est relativement facile à établir et à maintenir. Mais, c'est d'établir des liens avec la communauté d'affaires francophones. Ça c'est plus difficile. La communauté d'affaires francophones, elle existe. Il y a des Francophones qui sont en affaires dans différents domaines, mais, il n'y a pas, à mon avis, un lien qui a été fait entre elle et l'école. C'est difficile à établir des liens entre la communauté d'affaires francophones et les écoles françaises. Je pense qu'on va devoir le faire si ce n'est que pour trouver des débouchers pour certains programmes qu'on veut enseigner à l'école ce qu'on appelle en anglais work experience; expérience au travail ou des programmes de ce genre-là. Je pense qu'il va définitivement falloir établir ce genre de rapport avec la communauté d'affaires francophones, de trouver des Francophones qui s'intéressent et qui sont ouverts à accueillir des jeunes et qui sont ouverts à venir à l'école. Je pense que c'est toujours à refaire dans ce domaine-là. Puis, je n'ai pas l'impression qu'on est très fort là-dedans.

Another role the business community was perceived as having was that of legitimizing the status of the French language. It appears from the understandings held that many participants believe that language status is determined in large part by the use of the language in the business world. This was expressed as follows.

> Il y a peu de gens qui s'affichent spontanément en français. Cependant, il y en a beaucoup plus qu'on pense qui le pourrait. Je suis surprise à chaque fois que je rentre dans des commerces et que des gens reconnaissent mon accent français et qu'à ce moment ils m'offrent un service en français. C'est certain que j'ai un accent quand je parle anglais et je vais probablement mourir avec cet accent. Cependant, pour nos jeunes, ce n'est pas évident; ce n'est pas la même réalité car ils possèdent tous une compétence égale dans les deux langues. Ce qui est nommé un avantage devient-il un inconvénient? Ça c'est une préoccupation ultime! Qu'est-ce qui leur permettra ou quel élément saura déclencher légitimement un transfert de langues chez les commerçants devant la compétence d'excellence en anglais de nos jeunes. Où, quand, et comment est-ce qu'on est prêt à donner un statut à la langue française? Est-ce qu'on est vraiment prêt à s'en servir dans le monde des affaires? En fin de compte, le statut de la langue sera déterminé en autant que les infrastructures en place légitiment et assurent le service en français.

<u>The role of the majority.</u> Another stakeholder identified as having a key role in the establishment and implementation of francophone schools is the majority. By majority, participants tended to refer to those individuals who did not identify themselves with a particular minority group, but rather identified themselves with the English speaking population. The first issue identified by participants was the view of the francophone minority held by the majority. Several participants expressed frustration with the notion that they felt that the majority group did not acknowledge their existence; hence their contribution to the larger society. One participant expressed this frustration in these terms.

> On a eu quelques occasions où comme conseil scolaire on n'a pas reçu des télécopies du ministère. C'est comme si on n'existait pas parce qu'on n'était pas sur la liste de distribution comme conseil. Ou bien, dans bien d'autres cas, on va recevoir les informations toutes en anglais même s'ils savent qu'on est francophone et que eux ont des gens qui parlent français! Alors, à un moment donné tu commences à penser que selon eux, soit on est comme tous les autres conseils scolaires ou bien qu'on ne compte pas. Donc, on est

un peu comme l'école dans le champ. J'ai l'impression que dans le département de l'éducation, on est encore perçu comme étant eux autres. Tu sais, et puis il y a eux autres!

On this same issue, another participant voiced similar concerns. However, in sharing her experience, she was more optimistic because she noted a change in the way that she was viewed over time. She shared this personal experience on the issue.

Quand je suis arrivée au ministère, les autres fonctionnaires étaient très anti-francophone. We were nothing but a thorn in their side! D'autre ouvrage puis d'autre argent à arracher d'eux autres! Mais, il y en a qui, après un bout de temps-là, nous disaient qu'ils commençaient à comprendre. Tu sais, à comprendre que j'étais différent parce que j'avais un autre background.

While sharing his views on the issue of how the majority viewed not only the francophone minority, but minorities in general, one participant suggested that the problem was indeed with the majority and not with the minorities. He believed that ultimately the onus was on the majority to reevaluate and alter the view that it holds with respect to what it means to be a contributing member of the larger Canadian and ultimately global society. He expresses this in the following passage.

Mais, nous autres aussi on est en état de survivance. Puis, on a très peu de ressources. On me demande même des fois en milieu social: 'Well you Francophones should come and help us develop our English Social Studies programs.' Moi je dis: 'B-------! We don't even have enough resources for our own selves! But, we can meet, share, but you have to carry it yourselves. You're going to have to give yourselves a discipline and that understanding of Canada. You know, if you really want to develop a good Canadian Social Studies program that includes French people, Native people, and other minorities in your program, you're going to have to do it! Don't ask us to do it and defend it so that consequently, you go a little ways to accommodate. That doesn't help you, it doesn't help us!

Enrollments

The fourth major issue to be identified by participants relates to the many concerns associated with enrollments in these newly established schools. On this issue, three concerns were identified. These are the role that French immersion programs have on

today's enrollments, the recruitment of students, and the retention of these students, especially at the secondary level.

French Immersion Program Impact

In Alberta, as in many other provinces and territories in Canada, many French immersion programs were established soon after the passing of the Official Languages Act of 1969. Although these programs were initially welcomed and in many instances established by Francophones themselves, it was soon realized by some that these second language programs were not meeting the needs of francophone children. However, once French immersion was established, it would become extremely difficult to establish another program designed specifically for francophone children living in a minority situation.

Historical involvement. The first barrier to be identified by participants with respect to the issue of enrollments is the historical involvement of Francophones in the establishment of French immersion programs. This involvement may have created the perception among many francophone parents that the French immersion program offered in many schools was established to meet the needs of their children. One participant expressed this in the following passage.

> Comme Francophone, on a été impliqué dans l'établissement des écoles d'immersion. Non seulement impliqué, mais on a même été là à l'origine de ces écoles au début des années 1970s et puis on s'est bien doté d'institutions. Alors, avec plus de 25 ans d'histoire et d'implication dans les écoles d'immersion, on peut voir comment l'immersion peut jouer contre nous aujourd'hui.

One program for two clienteles. In their early years, French immersion programs attracted both anglophone and francophone students. Many staff members were experiencing difficulty meeting the needs of these two distinct clienteles in the same classroom with one program; the French immersion program which was designed to meet the needs of the second language learner. When these staff members, who themselves tended to be francophone, began to question the appropriateness of the French immersion program for the francophone student, there was pressure from administrators not to raise the issue. One participant shared this experience on the issue.

> J'ai commencé à enseigner dans les écoles d'immersion quand les écoles françaises n'étaient pas là. Puis, c'est à ce moment-là que j'ai commencé à

dénoncer ce qui se passait dans mes classes. Puis, moi, je n'étais pas à l'aise. Mon directeur à ce moment-là me dit: 'Écoute, là! On t'a engagée pour enseigner cette classe-là, là, puis ferme-toi la boîte! C'est tout que tu as à faire'! Déjà ça me dérangeait énormément parce que je me disais que j'étais en train de faire désapprendre à des élèves francophones qui n'ont pas droit à l'éducation qui répondrait à leurs besoins. Et puis, je ne suis pas en mesure de prendre mon salaire à chaque mois quand je sais que ce que je fais, démunit les élèves. Alors, je suis partie de loin. Puis, aussi, je peux te dire que j'étais maman de deux jeunes bébés à ce moment-là. Alors, tout dans le processus de mon travail et de ma personne qui s'appropriait de sa famille, je me disais: 'Non, il y a quelque chose qui ne fonctionne pas en Alberta.' Alors, c'est de là que je me suis engagée vraiment dans l'éducation francophone.

Outcomes of the French immersion program for the francophone student. Initially the French immersion program was welcomed by many Francophones in the early 1970s. In reflecting on his experience with having had two children go through this program, one participant who is francophone had the following observations to share with respect to the short term and possible long term effects on his children.

> Même si mes fils ne parlaient que le français avant de commencer l'école, ils ont commencé à avoir un accent; l'accent des Anglophones parce que leurs pairs, à l'école, la façon qu'ils prononçaient, c'était une façon, disons, d'un Anglophone qui apprend le français. Et puis, nos enfants, pour parler avec eux, empruntaient le même discours, intonation de voix. Alors, ils avaient le même accent. Alors, ils arrivaient à la maison et puis on disait: 'Mais, parle pas de même'! Puis, ils se rendaient compte qu'à l'école, ils parlaient d'une façon avec les Anglophones et puis à la maison, bien, il fallait qu'ils changent. On s'est aperçu aussi que c'était des enfants qui étaient tranquilles à la maison mais, qui étaient apparemment assez discipés à l'école parce qu'on s'est rendu compte qu'ils n'étaient pas motivés. Les autres, leurs pairs, eux apprenaient du vocabulaire. Ils apprenaient quelque chose. Ils étaient occupés. Les nôtres, par contre, on les laisse tranquille parce qu'ils ont le vocabulaire. Alors, ce qui manquait c'était d'apprendre et d'apprendre comment apprendre. Les Anglophones, eux, ils bûchaient, ils travaillaient, ils avaient des stratégies pour apprendre. Mais, les Francophones, eux, ils n'avaient pas ces stratégies-là. Alors, lorsqu'au niveau de la troisième

année, on peut dire que les Anglophones avaient fait des progrès formidables et puis, ils maniaient bien la langue: ils lisaient bien. Mais, après ça, nous nos enfants demeuraient en arrière parce qu'ils avaient perdu ce temps-là puis ils n'étaient pas habitués à travailler ou n'avaient pas établi des stratégies d'apprentissage.

The French immersion program for the partially assimilated student. Another concern identified with the French immersion program was that parents whose children tend to be less proficient in the French language tend to favour this program over French first language programs. When asked to elaborate on the difficulties one francophone authority was experiencing with enrollments, one participant shared the following.

> Dans nos jurisdiction, la concurrence comme on va dire, ce sont les programmes d'immersion. Même si les cours d'immersion ont été établis dans les années passées pour donner l'occasion aux Anglophones d'apprendre le français comme deuxième langue, ils sont devenus des programmes pour les Francophones qui n'étaient pas aussi forts. Alors, si tu n'étais pas aussi fort en français, tu n'étais pas dans le programme francophone, tu étais dans le programme d'immersion. C'est ça que les parents pensaient.

Competing for students. In the current climate, schools compete for students. In addition to this, growth in the French immersion programs in some jurisdictions appears to have reached a plateau. Accordingly, with the recent establishment of francophone school jurisdictions, there is the potential for these jurisdictions to directly compete with jurisdictions operating existing French immersion programs for the same students. One participant questioned the marketing practices used by some jurisdictions to recruit students. He shared the following on the issue.

> Un des problèmes, c'est qu'il y a certains conseils scolaires qui sont en train de promouvoir leurs cours d'immersion comme étant la même chose qu'un programme francophone qui serait donné dans une école homogène francophone. Et puis, c'est un peu de mauvaises informations qui sont données aux parents pour dire que c'est la même chose parce que ça ne l'est pas.

Lack of history. The last issue identified by participants relates to the notion that francophone schools have not been in existence long enough allow the public to see the

tangible differences and distinct outcomes of the two programs. One participant described it in this way.

> Je pense que l'école d'immersion nuit aux écoles francophones parce qu'on n'est pas encore arrivé à pouvoir faire la distinction concrète et claire entre ce que c'est l'école d'immersion et l'école francophone. Qu'est-ce qui une école apporte par rapport à ce que l'autre apporte? Et, quelle est la raison d'être d'une et quelle est la raison d'être de l'autre? Je pense qu'on n'est pas arrivé puis les données ne sont pas là. Elles sont même rares au niveau du pays par rapport aux données qui peuvent démontrer la différence. Et puis des fois, la différence, ce n'est pas nécéssairement simplement au niveau de la compétence linguistique. Parce que, il y a des programmes d'immersion qui font un excéllent travail puis dépendant des activités auxquelles un enfant en immersion se prête, il peut certainement sortir à la fin d'une douzième année avec des compétences langagières presqu'aussi développées qu'un jeune Francophone. Mais, c'est tout le domaine de l'appartenance à la communauté, la participation dans la communauté par après, la participation que l'enfant, on espère que l'enfant fait, au niveau de la communauté tout au long de sa scolarité. Je pense que ce sont des différences qu'on a encore des difficultés à pouvoir identifier comme étant les différences entre l'école d'immersion et l'école francophone.

Recruitment

The second concern identified when addressing the larger issue of enrollments relates to the recruitment of section 23 students. Although very difficult to quantify, the perception among study participants was that in the province there are approximately 25,000 students who could access a francophone education as provided by these newly established school authorities. However, of this potential population, approximately 2,000 students are being educated by schools operated by these newly established Francophone Education Regional School Authorities. The others are either in English language programs, French immersion programs or francophone schools and or programs operated by English public and separate school jurisdictions.

Difficult to change program. The first challenge identified by participants was the notion that choosing a francophone education often means changing school for children. With the exception of parents who have no children in school, most parents are faced with

the unpleasant task of uprooting their children from their current school's social support system. For those parents who already have children in school and additional children at home, choosing a francophone school for the younger children means having siblings attend two different schools. According to participants, few parents were willing to see their children attend different schools or change school once already enrolled in a program unless they were dissatisfied with the service being provided.

Identification of minority students. Another issue identified by participants related to the identification of section 23 students. According to current regulations, school jurisdictions are obliged to identify and to inform section 23 parents of their rights to a francophone education. However, according to some participants, not all school jurisdictions are complying with this regulation and for those who are, it is often difficult for francophone jurisdictions to gain access to the information gathered. One participant shared the following understandings on the issue.

> Un autre point c'est le recrutement des élèves. Gros problème, gros défi. Comment les trouver parce que les autres conseils scolaires anglophones, certains ont refusé de coopérer avec nous. Sous le student regulation, ça dit que les parents doivent indiquer s'ils sont francophones et s'ils le sont, s'ils veulent être informés au sujet de leurs droits comme Francophones, pas nécéssairement de s'en prévaloir. Et puis, la plupart des conseils scolaires ne demandait pas cette information-là. Ils n'ont pas modifié leur formulaire d'inscription. Puis, le ministère n'a pas tapé les doigts à personne. Ils ne vont même pas les chercher. Et puis, une fois qu'ils ont l'information, certains conseils scolaires refusent de partager cette information. Si elle est ramassée, elle est ramassée pour une raison. On aurait voulu qu'elle soit partagée avec nous.

Sufficient numbers for economic viability. On the issue of economic viability, two concerns were identified. The first area relates to opening new school sites. As previously mentioned, opening a new school often means trying to convince parents to transfer their children from an existing program to a new one. Although some parents are willing to make this change for the perceived long term benefits, it appears that for the majority of parents, this is not an option. Even for those parents who pledge their support for a new school by signing their name on a list of potential transferees, when the time comes to actually make the transfer, many do not follow through. One participant described this phenomenon in the following story.

> Pour ouvrir une nouvelle école, il nous faut des nombres. Alors, on se fixe des nombres et une fois qu'on a les inscriptions requises, on l'ouvre. Mais, à la dernière minute, les parents pourraient changer d'idée. Alors, c'est très très onéreux. Même là où tu n'as pas d'autres écoles, à quel point est-ce que tu dis: 'Oui, vous êtes assez nombreux pour qu'on mette un enseignant'? Alors, ça c'est un gros gros problème!

The other issue relating to economic viability has to do with the overall enrollments. With the current framework where the overall funding is determined in large part by enrollments, a sufficient number of students is needed to support the total costs of providing an autonomous francophone education. One participant expressed this in these terms.

> Of all the issues, the first one to come to mind is certainly enrollment. Without an increase in enrollments, the system is so small that it is marginally viable. So, even if you have good programs, good curriculum, even if you have schools that make sense in terms of buildings, even if you have the community involved, if you can't increase the school enrollments, in some areas, some of those will have to close if we can't do something better.

School location. Another factor affecting the enrollments is the location of the schools. When choosing a school, it appears that the distance and consequently the time a child has to spend riding a school bus is a factor. Some participants noted that choosing a francophone school often means a personal sacrifice for the child. Rather than say having the time to participate in extra-curricular activities after school, most of these children spend this time riding the school bus. So, school location can determine in large part how children spend their out of school time and as such, is considered by parents when choosing a school. One participant shared the following scenario on this issue.

> La distance peut influencer les inscriptions. Si quelqu'un avait besoin d'embarquer son enfant pour une heure de temps sur un autobus le matin et la même chose le soir, c'est sûr que ça joue. Mettons que l'enfant veut jouer au hockey ou aller faire du patin de fantaisie ou quelque chose comme ça, d'où prendrait-il le temps? Alors, si dans la communauté il y a le choix entre l'école francophone à une heure d'autobus ou l'école à deux voies, c'est sûr que la distance va affecter nos inscriptions.

Recruitment strategies. When talking about recruitment itself, participants appeared to be unsure as to how to proceed. On the one hand, some participants seemed to be suggesting that overt action was not something which ought to be done because of a perceived ulterior motive and on the other hand, some participants tended to think that aggressive recruitment strategies had to be used to increase enrollments. To illustrate the former set of understandings, one participant shared the following.

> Il va falloir qu'on commence à expliquer aux parents pourquoi ils devraient choisir l'école francophone mais ça ne peut pas venir de nous, les Francophones, parce que ça ne sera pas cru. Donc, il va falloir que ça vienne d'un third party that has no direct interest in it, from someone that has nothing to be gained by it. Autrement, ils penseront qu'il y a un ulterior motive.

Supporting the other, more aggressive view with respect to recruitment, one participant shared the following view.

> On disait: 'Bâtissez une école francophone et puis tu vas voir, ça ne prendra pas longtemps avant qu'elle va se remplir'! Je dis: 'That's b-------! That's b-------!' Ce n'est pas l'édifice, c'est l'engagement des gens qui compte. On a peur d'aller chercher l'engagement des gens. On parle beaucoup de recrutement, mais je pense qu'on a trop peur d'aller faire du porte à porte; d'aller parler avec les gens; d'aller expliquer c'est quoi le projet d'une éducation francophone pour que les gens comprennent. On a énormément beaucoup de travail à faire de ce côté-là.

Declining enrollments. A major concern for Alberta's newly established autonomous francophone school authorities is the perception among some participants that enrollments appear to be declining. Of further concern to these participants is the fact that a significant amount of funding has been allocated specifically for the development, promotion and recruitment of additional students. One participant voiced his concern with student enrollments in the following passage.

> Quand je suis venu ici, je me suis apperçu qu'on avait dépensé entre quatre à 500 000 piastres en recrutement dans les deux dernières années et puis qu'on avait moins d'élèves que l'année précédente. Alors j'ai dit: 'We've got a s--- of a big problem here'! Alors, j'ai téléphoné à un autre conseil scolaire et puis ça faisait depuis cinq ans que leurs nombres descendaient.

> They got a big problem! Dans une autre région, il y avait habitude d'avoir une dixième et une onzième à une de leurs écoles, mais là, il n'y en avait plus! Tu vois, là, on a vraiment un problème de ce côté-là.

Difficult to convince Francophones. Another issue identified by participants is that, for the most part, Francophones are not themselves convinced that autonomous francophone schools have benefits worthy of consideration over other program choices available to them. One participant expressed this in the following passage.

> Un autre problème qui existe ici et je pense ailleurs, c'est de convaincre les Francophones eux-mêmes que la meilleure chose pour maintenir et soutenir et promouvoir leur culture et leur langue, c'est l'école homogène francophone. Il y a toujours une réticence de certains Francophones que l'école homogène va séparer la communauté ou bien n'aide pas pour garder sa langue mais la preuve est dans le fait que les écoles francophones, ça fonctionne. Mais, comment convaincre les gens que l'école francophone c'est une option viable qui n'empiètre pas sur les autres et qui est une autre option disponible à eux?

Afraid of growth. The last issue to be raised among participants was the belief that many stakeholders are comfortable with the current enrollment levels or are simply afraid of the implications of growth. One participant illustrates this best in the following passage.

> Selon moi, la préoccupation majeure c'est vraiment les inscriptions pour s'assurer de grandir. Il faut grandir. C'est notre responsabilité de grandir. Et puis, ça c'est un plus grand défi que ça de l'air parce que ce n'est pas tout le monde à l'intérieur du système qui croit ça! Même, je suis surpris à quel point je suis obligé de me débattre constamment pour faire comprendre aux gens qu'il faut grandir parce qu'ils ont peur de l'implication de grandir. Les gens ont une frousse terrible. Au lieu de voir positivement l'agrandissement ou l'accroissement du conseil ou de nos écoles, ils voient ça, eux, comme une menace. C'est quasiment comme si tous les plus purs, les plus beaux, les plus fins, ils sont rentrés. Et puis, tous ceux qui vont venir dorénavant, sont moins beaux, moins grands, moins fins, moins francophones. Donc, ils menacent l'intégrité du projet éducatif de ces écoles-là. Pour moi, c'est probablement numéro un dans mes préoccupations.

Retention

The third area of concern identified by participants when talking about enrollments relates to the retention of students in these autonomous school jurisdictions. Several reasons as to why students left these schools were identified as was a strategy which may assist these jurisdictions retain their students.

Migration. The first factor identified by participants with respect to student retention was the notion that a significant part of these schools' clientele is mobile and somewhat transient. According to one participant, the major cause for students leaving the francophone school in her school jurisdiction is that the families are moving out of the region to find employment elsewhere. And, given the limited employment opportunities in this rural area, when a family leaves, the odds of being replaced by another family moving in are small. In the end, therefore, the net outward migration of Francophones from a given area can have a significant impact on enrollment patterns for any given francophone school.

Distance from schools. The second factor identified which participants believed affected student retention was the distance from school. According to participants, distance appears to be a larger factor as students move from elementary to secondary schools. One participant referred to a situation in a large urban centre where one secondary school program serves most of the district's needs. The problem retaining students in this case was not at the elementary level where most of these schools were located within a reasonable distance but at the secondary level where students would have to travel a considerable distance. Many of these students were not willing to invest the time required and as such, transferred to another school closer to home.

Lack of credibility. Another factor identified as contributing to the attrition rate was a lack of perceived credibility. Although all of the newly established school jurisdictions which are operating schools have implemented a complete program from kindergarten through grade 12, the secondary programs continue to lack the credibility required to attract all of the students completing grades six or nine. Participants attribute this in part to the limited course offerings, particularly at the senior high school level.

Compromised social setting. Participants acknowledged that the number of students enrolled in secondary schools, especially at the high school level, compromised the social setting for students. One participant described this phenomenon in the following way.

> Quand ça fait 10 ans que tu es dans le même environnement et que tous les jeunes se connaissent, dépendamment de quelle sorte d'élève que tu es, tu portes des étiquettes. Alors, ça peut être aussi au point de vue sociale que les étudiants veulent du changement. Alors, il vont à d'autres écoles du système public ou catholique. Donc, les raisons sont diverses et on peut les entendre un peu partout. Mais, oui, sur le point de vue sociale, on n'est pas assez nombreux pour former des groupes, pour former des groupes intéressants.

Residential program. Having identified the issue of student retention, especially at the senior high school level, one participant suggested that one strategy to retain these students might be the establishment of a residential program for senior high school students. She makes this suggestion in the following passage.

> Comment désservir les petits nombres au secondaire? Moi je dis qu'il va falloir qu'un des conseils s'y penche sur la possibilité d'établir un programme de résidence. La réalité est telle qu'on n'est pas capable de désservir les Francophones partout dans la province. Bon, c'est sûr que si on ne peut pas ouvrir une école, il y a l'enseignement à domicile. C'est une façon, mais est-ce pratique rendu au secondaire deuxième cycle? Il y a aussi l'aspect résidentiel comme le Collège Mathieu. Je ne veux pas dire que le Collège Mathieu est la réponse, la solution. Mais, peut-être qu'un des conseils scolaires francophones devrait regarder à l'ouverture d'une résidence ou d'un programme de résidence. Je sais que pour les jeunes, ça ne fonctionnerait pas, mais pour les plus vieux, certains parents seraient heureux d'apprendre qu'il y a un programme résidentiel pour leur adolescent.

Degree of Management and Control

The fifth major issue identified by the 12 participants relates to the actual degree of management and control that stakeholders working toward the establishment of autonomous francophone schools enjoy. In looking at this issue in historical terms, it is evident that the francophone community has made some gains with respect to obtaining the right to manage and control the education of its children. One participant described the gains made over the past 30 years in the following way.

> Thirty years ago, we had English language schools with a French program. This program was usually limited to a 30 minute period per day. From there, we went to French immersion programs. We learned from this experience that these programs were not the key because the francophone student was learning French as a second language. And then, we went to French as a first language programs and from there, the decision of parents was to take control of the system so that it wasn't going to reflect the majority reality, but their own needs.

In spite of these gains, however, the central issue relating to the degree of management and control remains. As participants shared their understandings of the many issues addressed, this issue tended to underpin most of the stories and experiences. Inevitably, however, as participants talked, most did broach the issue. One participant put it in these terms.

> On a la gestion. Mais, est-ce qu'on l'a vraiment? On l'a au niveau de l'école. Moi je l'ai au niveau de mon conseil, et puis il y a trois conseils scolaires dans la province. Et après ça, la gestion n'existe pas. Quand on sait très bien c'est qui le Ministre puis le Sous-Ministre, puis comment ça fonctionne, puis quand on revendique au niveau des besoins spécifiques des élèves, on n'est pas entendu!

In discussing this issue, several areas will be examined. To begin with, participants' observations on the present governing structure will be shared. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the granting these newly established francophone school jurisdictions the exclusive right to provide francophone education.

The Provincial Structure

In talking about the provincial structure, participants tended to refer to two separate structures. These are the Language Services Branch also referred to as la Direction de l'éducation française (la D.E.F.) and Alberta Education also referred to as the big machine or the big wheel.

La D.E.F.. The Language Services Branch at Alberta Education assumes responsibility for the development of French as a first and second language programs offered in Alberta's school systems. This includes the development and provision of support services to foster the optimal development of students enrolled in one of the French

programs offered. In addition to this, la D.E.F. manages the various federal-provincial agreements relating to French language education and the many programs governed by these agreements. An example of these programs includes the Teacher Bursary program which is designed to assist French language teachers with their professional development needs.

In addition to its official roles and responsibilities, la D.E.F. also acts as the province's data gathering agent on issues relating to French language instruction. One participant described this additional role in the following way.

> Il y a d'autres instances de consultations. Elles ne sont pas nécéssairement aussi, officiellement sactionnées dans le sens que le Ministre, ce n'est pas nécéssaire que le Ministre leur donne une sanction, mais, il y a un comité consultatif qui va être mis sur pieds pour la programmation qui va être composé surtout de gens dans le champs; les gens dans les écoles ou d'enseignants. Puis, il y a toujours, dépendant des besoins, du travail qu'on est en train de faire, toute une série de comités adhocs d'enseignants, encore surtout puis de directeurs d'écoles pour nous faire des recommandations et nous faire des commentaires sur les programmes qu'on développe et le genre de programmes qu'on développe.

Alberta Education. When talking about the larger societal governing structure for education, participants tended to refer to Alberta Education as "the big wheel" or "the big machine." Although most participants expressed concern with the lack of power the francophone community actually held in society, one participant was more optimistic. He shared the following insights with respect to the gains made in the area francophone education.

> Maintenant c'est plus facile, parce qu'on accepte. Par exemple, je suis en train de travailler sur un 'framework for francophone education.' Tu sais, ils ne l'accepteront peut-être pas. Mais, il y a 10 ans, on n'y aurait même pas pensé. Alors, avec tout le réseautage qui existe dans la francophonie canadienne qui a aussi pris conscience de ses droits qui ont été revendiqués, qui prend conscience des besoins éducatifs à travers de certains instituts de recherche. On n'a pas beaucoup, mais, quelques uns. Puis, alors maintenant, il n'y a plus de recule. C'est dans la machine, c'est dans

l'institution, c'est dans la grosse roue. On n'a pas toute notre place dans grosse roue encore, mais, on a notre petite place.

Observations on the Issue of Management and Control

Although the province responded to the Supreme Court Judgment of March, 1994 by creating seven Francophone Education Regional Authorities, most participants expressed concerns with trying to meet the educational needs of the francophone community within a larger English governing structure. The following represents an identification of these concerns along with a brief description for each.

No agreement among Francophones themselves. The first observation to stand out on the larger issue of management and control is that it appears that Francophones themselves have not as yet come to an agreement as to what to do with the power vested in them with the 1994 amendments as presented in School Act. For some, a French version of the programs offered in schools by the majority is the ideal whereas for others, it means establishing a distinct program which is grounded in the minority francophone culture. In sharing an experience about the development of a social studies program, one participant illustrates this phenomenon in the following story.

> Je pense par exemple aux études sociales. Bien, il a fallu se préparer un bon deux mois d'avance pour voir comment on allait se préparer psychologiquement d'abord à l'interne, avec notre propre monde. Comment est-ce qu'on va emmener l'idée d'une programmation différente pour un rendement équitable et égal en milieu minoritaire sans que les parents se sentent qu'on leur donne un programme de basse qualité, de pauvre qualité. Bon, ça, ensuite à l'interne ici. Comment est-ce qu'on va aborder ça ici? Ce n'est pas tout le monde qui veut ça, là!

Pressure to de the same as the majority. In addition to the pressures from within the francophone community itself not to develop a distinct program of studies, there is also a lot of pressure to conform to what the majority does by the majority itself. In describing the change process in the area of program development, one participant identifies the lack of resources necessary to effect change as well as the energy required to deviate from what is done by the majority. He shared this story to make his point.

> Mais, on est dans le grand système puis on fait le mieux qu'on peut. Moi je crois que les élèves sont victimes quand même; moins qu'ils l'étaient il y a

10 ans, 15 ans, puis certainement moins qu'ils l'étaient dans mon temps! Mais, tu sais, il y a encore de la victimisation. Ce n'est pas de la mauvaise volonté, mais, c'est, tu sais, de se rattraper: C'est de rattraper le temps. Et puis, les ressources manquent. Maintenant, ce n'est pas évident que les structures formelles au ministère favorisent la pleine réponse au défi. On est pris beaucoup à justifier si on veut bifurquer. Alors, souvent on met beaucoup d'énergie à revenir puis à refaire comme la majorité. Alors, pendant ce temps, on s'essouffle puis on perd notre élan pour le nouveau défi.

Too many structures. In being pressured to conform to the ways of the majority, the francophone community has also responded by creating a parallel governing structure to oversee francophone education. In describing this parallel structure, however, many participants expressed the concern that the francophone community does not have the resources, both human and fiscal, to maintain these structures. The result, according to many participants, is that there are too many ineffective structures in place. One participant illustrates this view as he talked about La Fédération des conseils et des autorités scolaires. He said it these terms.

Parlant de structures, il y La Fédération des conseils et des autorités scolaires. Bon, it's a loose organization comme toutes fédérations. C'est l'équivalent, c'est le parallèle de l'Alberta School Boards' Association. Ça prends des ressources pour maintenir toute cette structure puis ils se rencontrent et puis ils ont un plan d'action. Mais, il n'y a personne qui prend le leadership. Cette fédération est complètement ineffective. Ils ont même la misère à convoquer et à assister aux réunions. Moi, je suis ici depuis six mois, puis il n'y a personne de mon conseil qui est, moi inclus, allé à une réunion de cette fédération jusqu'à date.

We are different. It appears that establishing a parallel governing structure is not the answer. Many participants described their frustration with trying to replicate the governing structures established by the majority. Participants cited such barriers as funding, human resources, and lack of will from within the francophone community to provide the necessary leadership for these structures to be functional in addressing the needs of the francophone student. In sharing her experience with having to work within these structures, one participant noted that the structures themselves are serving as a means for

Francophones to confirm for themselves as well as for the majority that they are indeed different from the majority. She illustrates this phenomenon in the following passage.

> Des préoccupations, ça sous-entend que dans l'action à tous les jours, quand j'ai à revendiquer des ressources ou des moyens ou des programmes pour les élèves, c'est certain qu'à un moment donné, tu suis l'échelon puis des fois les gens vont me dire: 'Diane, n'oublie pas, le Sous-Ministre, tu sais qui il est en Alberta.' Donc, je dis: 'OK, merci. Je reviens à ma base, et c'est à nous de ne pas rénover un système, c'est d'essayer d'innover, de créer, essayer justement de bâtir dans un nouveau qui n'existe pas. Alors, plus on veut s'intégrer, plus les gens voient qu'on est différent. Parce que, je ne peux plus monter un système parallèle. Parce que, les structures qui sont en place vont toujours me projeter l'image que je suis différente. Puis, on se doit d'être différent, parce que sans ça, on ne répondra pas aux jeunes.

Convincing those in control. Having accepted that there are differences between Francophones and the majority cultures, participants believed that it was incumbent upon Francophones to identify these differences and to communicate these to those in control. Once these differences are known and accepted by the majority, it may become easier for Francophones to justify an allocation of resources required to address their specific concerns and issues. However, a lot of work has to be done to realize this. One participant expressed this in these terms.

> On peut avoir conscience de quelque chose. Après ça, il faut essayer de le nommer en des termes scientifiques ou avec des références scientifiques pour enfin l'emmener à l'attention des décideurs. Puis, jusqu'à date, ça été des décideurs anglophones. Maintenant il y a des décideurs francophones aussi, mais peut-être pas au même niveau. Puis, après ça, bien, il faut convaincre ces décideurs-là que c'est important puis qu'il faut y donner les ressources pour attaquer ce défi. De notre côté, il faudrait peut-être considérer de nouvelles façons de faire qui ne sont pas dépassées. Du côté anglophone, bien, il faut toujours justifier une différence. Ce n'est pas encore acquis. Si on avait notre système jusqu'au bout, bien là on pourrait établir plus facilement nos priorités. Mais, il faut toujours fiter nos priorités dans celles du grand système.

Lack of power. Perhaps the major issue identified by participants is the sense that although legislation was passed to provide Francophones with the management and control of their own schools, Francophones still do not have the power required to truly govern their own education. In talking about the ability to influence the education system to meet the needs of Francophones, many participants identified as problematic the limited power Francophones actually hold within government and more specifically, Alberta Education. In sharing his views with respect to the lack of power, one participant had the following to say.

> Je crois qu'un des défis majeurs c'est la pleine gestion jusqu'au Ministre. Je trouve qu'on a la gestion pour le terrain mais, on n'a pas la gestion de tout ce qui est ministère. On a des services ici et là, de programmation essentiellement, des services d'appui, mais pas de gestion. Même la D.E.F. n'est qu'un service de suppléance pour d'autres secteurs quand ils sont mal pris, mais sans mandat, sans autorité. Donc, quant à moi, il faudrait avoir dans tous les secteurs du ministère des services en français et puis que quelqu'un porte la responsabilité de ces services-là.

Language use. Participants pointed out that one of the benefits of getting the right to manage and control their own schools was that French could be used as the official language of communication for conducting business. According to participants in this study, policies declaring French as the official language of communication have been adopted by more than one of the established Francophone Education Regional Authorities. However, in spite of these established policies, communicating in French with provincial government officials, including those working for Alberta Education, remains a challenge because Alberta passed legislation adopting English as the official language of business used by the government. The issue, therefore, is that we have two levels of government trying to communicate with each other in two different official languages. One participant describes the frustrations associated with this practice in the following passage.

> Le grand défi c'est de quand même recevoir des services du ministère d'éducation en langue française. Je ne suis pas en train de dire: 'Ah maudit! Il faut que le gouvernement soit bilingue!' Je parle de choses très fondamentales. Exemple, on nous demande de sonder les parents par rapport à leur satisfaction quant à la qualité d'éducation et ainsi de suite. On ne nous fournit même pas les questions. Il faut absolument que ce soit les documents officiels quand on parle des rapports annuels et ainsi de suite,

faut toute traduire ou interpréter ce que ce sont les directives ministérielles. Moi je parle strictement du fondamental.

Accessing power and exerting influence. Although participants generally tended to express concerns with the actual amount of power the francophone community enjoyed, one participant noted that in Alberta, the individual did have access to the government. In talking about the issue, this participant identified four different ways in which an individual or organization could access those in control and perhaps even influence policy direction. He outlines these channels in the following passage.

> Quand c'est rendu au niveau politique, ce sont les politiciens qui prennent ces décisions-là. Je pense qu'il y a quatre moyens. Soit par les employés de la D.E.F. qui serait essentiellement le moyen bureaucratique par rapport à les choses. Il y a le moyen du Comité consultatif du Ministre. Ensuite, il y a le contact direct au Ministre lui-même par rapport à une question quelconque. Puis, il y a un autre moyen puis ça ça serait de passer par son député. Ça s'est fait assez rarement, mais il y a eu des exemples où ça s'est fait dépendant des questions qu'ils voulaient discuter. La question d'exclusivité de l'éducation francophone quand cette question-là se discutait avant la mise en oeuvre de l'éducation francophone serait un exemple de ce genre où les députés de circonscriptions dans ces coins-là s'en sont mêlés.

In terms of exercising influence, this same participant described the inner workings of decision making within the government itself. On this issue, it becomes evident that the issue is transferred to senior officials or the politicians themselves. Given the relative absence of Francophones in these positions, decisions which have implications for the francophone community are often made with little or no direct involvement from the community itself. The following passage describes this participant's understanding of how decisions and policies are made in senior government offices.

> C'est le sous-ministre adjoint à qui le directeur de la D.E.F. répond qui prend le dossier. N'empêche pas que quand il y a question d'éducation francophone, ou d'autres choses qui ont un impact sur l'éducation francophone, qu'on invite le directeur à la réunion du comité exécutif pour leur fournir des informations, des données, ou leur fournir tout simplement son opinion par rapport à ce qu'il pense pourrait être la meilleure solution, la direction à prendre. Alors, du comité exécutif, dépendant du genre de

> question à prendre, si c'est une question politique à prendre, ça serait une recommandation qui serait faite de là au Ministre. Puis, encore, si c'est question de changement de législation, le Ministre doit le faire, au niveau du Conseil des Ministres.

The fear of being punished. A concern which appears to preoccupy the francophone community is the constant fear of being punished by those individuals and institutions which are currently in control. Participants shared many examples which tend to substantiate this claim. The funding issue in the Peace River area where the High Prairie School District refused to transfer funding generated by resident students to the newly established Saint Isidore School District is an example where the francophone community felt it was being punished for its quest for autonomy. Another example which illustrates the issue occurred in Edmonton. One participant described the transfer of school buildings from Edmonton Catholic schools to the Conseil scolaire du Centre-Nord N° 4 in the following passage.

> In Edmonton, for example, turning over the facilities was an issue. I think you may have heard that there was some suspicion that Edmonton Catholic would dump all the bad buildings, books, teachers and so on on the francophone board. Edmonton Catholic expected to get paid for their schools and so there had to be some discussion and say: 'Look, you know these schools you operated, they were operated francophone. We are talking about the same kids. These schools were built with their money as Albertans. Just give it to them!' The francophone board ended up buying another school, but, the schools that they got at the time were those schools.

Although the province created the seven Francophone Education Regional Authorities to grant autonomy to Francophones, the fear of being punished by the majority continues today. One participant described this concern in the existing relationship between a large urban school board and a coordinating council which is doing its best to ensure the francophone population's educational needs are being met. He shared this fear of being punished in the following story.

> Le rôle du conseil de coordination est de sensibiliser les parents ayants droit de leurs droits comme Francophones. On est là pour les aider dans leurs démarches pour des services en français et même de négocier des services si possible. À Calgary, ils ont choisi de rester avec la commission catholique

> et maintenant, il va y avoir une autre école avec la commission publique. Mais, moi je me souviens quand mes enfants étaient à l'École Sainte-Anne et on a demandé aux parents s'ils voulaient telle chose ou telle autre. Mais, ce qui est arrivé, c'est qu'à cause des projets qui allaient aboutir, c'est à dire la nouvelle école Sainte-Marguerite Bourgeoys, je crois que les parents ne voulaient pas compromettre cette nouvelle école en emmenant la question de la gestion scolaire qui est aussi un des buts du conseil de coordination.

Taking our rightful place. Most participants in this study acknowledged that there was a lot of work to be done in order to completely implement the management and control of francophone schools as envisioned by the community. Complete implementation appears to mean that the francophone community and its institutions will only achieve this goal once it no longer feels vulnerable to the actions of the majority and further, once the majority understands and accepts the francophone community's quest for autonomy. To achieve this state of mutual understanding requires continued work on behalf of the francophone community. One participant illustrates this as he describes one of his roles in the workplace.

> Alors, on a à travailler très fort pour avoir, tu sais, to take our rightful place, puis de donner le plein sens de la D.E.F. au sein du ministère par rapport aux rôles des autres secteurs du ministère vis-à-vis les Francophones. On a beaucoup à faire de ce côté-là. On ne nous rejette pas, là. Tu sais, c'est juste leur inconscience puis, c'est nous qui avons à le porter. C'est à nous de nommer, c'est à nous d'ouvrir la route là-dedans. On a beaucoup à faire.

Achievement testing program. A recurring issue with many participants was Alberta Education's achievement testing program. Although no participant was against testing, many participants expressed their frustrations with this testing program. They explained that the current testing program is for the most part a translation of the instruments used in the English testing program. In addition to this, results from these tests become public knowledge. One case where the testing instrument appears not to match the program of studies is in grade three English Language Arts. For most francophone students, the study of English Language Arts is introduced in grade three and by the end of grade three, students would have received approximately one sixth of the instruction in this subject as compared to a student enrolled in a regular English language school. However, the francophone student must write the same test even though it may not reflect the program of

studies taught in francophone schools. One participant expressed his frustration on the issue as follows.

> On n'est pas prêt pour l'évaluation. On n'a même pas une programmation adéquate. On devrait mettre nos ressources vers le développement d'une programmation adéquate et aussi des ressources. Après ça, il n'y a pas de Francophones qui sont contre l'évaluation, tu sais. Je ne suis pas contre l'évaluation du tout! Mais, il faut que ce soit une évaluation qui est équitable et qui est ajustée à la clientèle. Il faudrait beaucoup de recherches pour faire ça puis, on a beaucoup d'autres choses à faire avant qu'on puisse développer tout un programme d'évaluation.

The role of the Language Services Branch. All participants for this study referred to the key role the Language Services Branch has in francophone schooling. The role was that officials working in this Branch became the spokespersons within the Alberta government for the francophone community on issues relating to francophone education. Given this, the participants identified the responsibility of these employees within the Language Services Branch that their knowledge and the understandings related to the issue of francophone schooling be current. In light of this, one participant described how government employees working with francophone schooling kept themselves abreast of the issues as follows.

> Bien, il y a les réunions des directeurs généraux, réunions de La Fédération des conseils scolaires et de coordination. Alors, ils vont nous mettre à l'ordre du jour pour une de leurs réunions et il y a aussi des réunions de directions d'écoles, des réunions où il y a un regroupement de professeurs, Le Conseil français de l'A.T.A., ces choses-là. Alors, ce sont des moyens officieux dans le sens que ce n'est pas systématique, ce n'est pas officiel. Mais, ce sont tous des moyens qu'on utilise dans le jeu du possible pour aller tâter le pouls; s'assurer qu'on soit au courant de ce qui se passe.

What is best for the child? In sharing their understandings on the issue of management and control, most participants expressed the concern that in practical terms, much work still has to be done to realize the goal of establishing truly autonomous francophone schools. Although the province has established and implemented a framework for francophone governance of its schools, complying with the existing structure and the associated regulations along with limited resources makes it such that the outcome of these

schools remains largely determined by the majority. However, it appears that not all members of the francophone community are willing to embrace the notion of autonomous schools. In sharing his understandings on the issue, one participant in particular tended to suggest a more cautious approach in which he focuses on what is best for the child. He expresses this caution in the following way.

> C'est qui qui peut faire la gestion des écoles de la meilleure façon? Est-ce que c'est les Anglophones qui peuvent gérer nos écoles? Ou, est-ce que c'est les Francophones? Alors, ça c'est la question que je me pose. Tu fais juste de transférer moi ce que j'ai appris dans l'industrie privée, si tu sais faire une chose puis tu es bon à la faire, et bien applique ça dans ton secteur. Alors, ce qui arrive, c'est que j'ai cette ouverture-là. Mais, j'ai l'ouverture aussi, qu'est-ce qui est le mieux pour l'enfant parce que moi, je ne suis pas enseignant.

Exclusive right to provide a francophone education. The last concern participants raised while sharing their views on the issue of management and control related to the notion of granting the francophone community the exclusive right to provide a francophone education for children of section 23 parents. At present, in Alberta, there are potentially three 100% publicly funded school jurisdictions providing educational services for the same geographical location. For example, the city of Edmonton is served primarily by the public board (Edmonton Public Schools), the separate board (Edmonton Catholic Schools), and the francophone jurisdiction (Conseil scolaire du Centre-Nord N° 4). Given their respective mandates, the Conseil scolaire du Centre-Nord N° 4 assumes the responsibility for providing and is the only jurisdiction offering a francophone program. In the same spirit, Edmonton Catholic Schools is the only jurisdiction providing a catholic education to the majority. As such, it does not include a francophone program within its program offerings. And, lastly, Edmonton Public Schools, while it offers a variety of programs for the majority, does not offer a catholic program nor does it offer a francophone program. In Edmonton, therefore, there seems to be an agreement among the providers of educational programs as to which jurisdiction will assume responsibility for offering which program. However, this situation does not appear to prevail throughout Alberta.

In most other communities, there appears to be some confusion among both providers and the clientele of the francophone program as to its distinct rationale and outcomes. As such, in many communities, the public and or separate boards continue to offer a francophone program within their schools. This is causing some concern for the

Francophone Education Regional Authorities because in many instances, it is difficult to convince parents to transfer their children to the autonomous francophone school governed and operated by Francophones themselves. In addition to this, many of the parents themselves were educated in these institutions. So for historical and nostalgic reasons, it may prove quite challenging for these newly created autonomous francophone school authorities to establish themselves in some of these communities. One participant shared the following on the issue.

> Le fait que le gouvernement non plus n'a pas tranché sur la question d'exclusivité est un problème. En autres mots, juste parce qu'on est un conseil scolaire francophone, ça ne veut pas dire qu'on a le mandat exclusif de traiter de l'éducation francophone. On permet à d'autres systèmes scolaires, les systèmes de la majorité de s'en occuper. Alors, tout ce que ça fait, c'est que ça confond davantage les gens parce que là, ils disent: 'Bien, on peut avoir du français. Il y en a en masse à l'autre école puis c'est l'école anglaise.' Alors, ce qu'ils ne comprennent pas sensiblement, c'est tout ce que ça prend pour mieux réussir. Je pense, en tous cas, il y a pas mal de confusion autour de cette question-là.

In terms of actually describing the francophone program being offered by one of the majority school jurisdictions, participants tended to be quite critical. Most participants felt that the programs offered were a diluted version of the intentions of the francophone program of studies and further, that oftentimes the program was adapted to reflect the reality of the students. In many cases, it was reported, that the reality was such that both francophone and anglophone students were grouped together and taught a program of sorts. One participant described his understandings of the program offered in the following terms.

> Dans cette région-là, on avait l'habitude d'offrir un programme francophone. Mais, avec la réorganisation qu'on a eue en éducation, c'est maintenant un autre conseil scolaire qui se charge d'offrir le programme francophone. Puis, maintenant que les jeunes du village avoisinant font partie du même conseil scolaire, ils les rentrent tous à la dite école. Alors, le résultat est que le programme est beaucoup dilué. Tu sais, il y a beaucoup plus d'Anglophones dans ces programmes maintenant donc le programme n'est ni francophone, ni immersion. C'est tailored to the needs comme on

dit! Mais, ils le font parce que c'est viable comme ça et non parce que ça répond aux besoins des jeunes Francophones.

Future Prospects

There appears to be a common understanding among study participants that the rights accorded to the francophone community living in a minority situation by the Canadian constitution provided the legal context which empowered this community to demand its own schools. The further interpretation of these constitutional rights by the courts eventually resulted in the establishment of autonomous francophone school jurisdictions in Alberta. The purpose of this section is to share participants' observations with respect to francophone schooling in Alberta today as well as to share participants' thoughts on future prospects.

Our Students Have Rights

In the past, francophone schooling was governed by the majority population. In this context, the legal structure and its supporting policies were used to determine practice in the area of francophone schooling. As such, the francophone community and educational practitioners had to accede to the wishes of the majority. However, granting the francophone community autonomy over its schools is empowering practitioners at the school level. The result appears to be such that student rights are now driving both practice and policy development. One participant shared the following incident which tends to support this notion.

> Bon, l'année passée, j'avais un jeune devant moi qui avait besoin d'un cours de français équivalent au Engish 16. Alors, j'ai téléphoné au ministère puis je leur en ai demandé un. Mais, ils m'ont dit: 'Ça n'existe pas du Français 16'! Bien non, ils ne l'ont pas fait. Alors j'ai dit au ministère: 'OK, on va prendre English 16 puis je vais marquer translates French 16'! Ils m'ont dit: 'Non, non! Tu ne peux pas faire ça!' Alors, j'ai répondu: 'Mais oui, mais, vous n'avez rien fait! C'est moi qui a le jeune! Je peux certain! Je vais lui faire un programme de Français 16'! Alors, c'est certain que quand tu fonctionnes dans une structure, à un moment donné que les gens vont dire: 'Non, non. Ce n'est pas de même qu'on fonctionne.' Mais, oui mais, moi j'ai un jeune qui a le droit à une éducation. Puis, c'est là qu'il doit fonctionner. Ce n'est pas dans quatre ans! C'est aujourd'hui!

The Quality of French is Improving

The time and effort that the francophone community has invested in demanding and realizing its rights appears to be paying dividends. One participants shared his observations with respect to the linguistic proficiency and cultural identity of students today as compared to that of 30 years ago and notes that the situation is improving. He makes this claim in the following passage.

> I look at the results now, and we have good curricula for schools. We have quality learning resources. It's not, well, we could always improve, but we have math resources, science resources, history books. We didn't have that 30 years ago. So, in that 30 year period, I look at the content from the education side and I say: 'It has greatly improved'! I look at students and I discuss with them and I find that while we may not have as many students, because assimilation was involved, the quality of French in the students that come out of our schools is far superior to what it was. I think their ability to write in the French language is a lot superior to what it was as well as their spoken language. Because, I recall that one of the problems 20 or 25 years ago was to get a student to speak in public was very very difficult in French because they didn't feel competent to do so. I think the francophone school is reversing that. People are proud now to say: 'Well that's my first language. I know the language of the land but I also know my language and I am proud to be able to speak it and write it.'

Assimilation Continues

Although the educational services intended for the francophone minority have greatly improved in recent years, the phenomenon of assimilation continues to take its toll in terms of overall numbers. The common belief among study participants is that the assimilation rate presently stands at approximately 63%. In practical terms, this means that for every 100 Francophones born in Alberta, only 37 will remain proficient in the French language in their lifetime. The other 63 will lose this proficiency. One participant shared his understandings with respect to assimilation in the following way.

> The information age has changed the environment considerably and that's why assimilation has been very hard to fight for people who don't have a very strong sense of where they are going and what they could bring to their

families in order to make sure they don't become completely assimilated. Assimilation is a process that will happen. Nations disappear through assimilation over hundreds of years. So, I think what you have to realize is that what we're trying to do is slow that process and assist people in defining their future.

Addressing the Issue of Assimilation

In addition to ruling in favour of the plaintiffs on the issue of management and control of francophone schools, the Dickson Judgment of March, 1990 also recognized that the francophone community living in a minority situation had suffered a lot of damage due to assimilation. In light of this, this judgment provided direction for the country as a whole to seriously look at this issue and further, suggested that stakeholders act to repair the damages caused by years of assimilation. The federal government, seen as one of these stakeholders, has responded by providing financial assistance to assist the province and the francophone community to establish autonomous school jurisdictions. Given that this first agreement was term certain, the federal government, in consultation with its various stakeholders, is in a position to evaluate the results achieved with this first agreement and further, is in a position to set the goals of a subsequent agreement. One participant expressed this in these terms.

> But, the problem is one of being able to promote and to convince people that keeping their language and their culture is a good thing. I think the next agreement will have to touch that. In fact, it is my understanding that federal officials are presently evaluating and reviewing the agreements across the country and the program itself. One of the terms that was used in the Dickson Judgment was the need for des effets réparateurs and that particular concept, I think, is taken seriously by the federal government and will come into the next agreement. I don't know exactly what it will entail, but this issue is being discussed with communities across the country to try to define that more clearly to see if that could assist. Enrollment is a major issue and when you know that in Alberta and British Columbia, assimilation rate varies between 65 and 75%, those are the people we are talking about, that we need to bring back into the fold and convince them that this is good for them and that this is good for their kids and that they will be better people. They will be more complete, if I can use that term, because they will have developed their complete selves, whatever their identity is. So, if we

use that as a basic premise, and whether it's right or wrong, I believe in it. And, I think that most of the leaders within the community that provide leadership will also believe that if you're not developing your identity completely as to who you are, then, your self concept is impacted and you become less productive. So, to have productive citizens, federal officials believe this is necessary for the minority that historically has never been particularly well supported.

Implications for Other Language Groups.

One of the issues to come to light is the realization that a program designed for the majority may not necessarily meet the educational needs of children who belong to another linguistic and or cultural group. In discussing the issue of what Francophones might have to share with these other groups, one participant had the following to say on the issue of educating other minority groups.

> Si j'étais autochtone, je m'inspirerais en tabarouette! J'irais jusqu'au bout. Essentiellement, c'est la même dynamique qui joue. Excepté qu'eux-autres, ils sont encore plus défavorisés au niveau du statut. Si j'étais un immigrant ou si je faisais partie d'un regroupement de minoritaire immigré, je m'inspirerais de tout ce qui a en éducation francophone pour avoir une meilleure réponse au développement académique et cognitif de mes enfants. Je suis ébahi quand je rencontre des collègues ici à des réunions du ministère et qu'on parle des difficultés d'apprentissage, le taux d'échec, de décrochage, puis que jamais on a l'idée de voir s'il y a un lien avec la langue première de l'enfant. Jamais qu'on fait ça. Non, we give them English as a second language classes and we integrate them as soon as we can and they should, you know, succeed. Mais, ce n'est pas comme ça que ça marche. Tu sais, je pose la question à ceux qui ont des enfants en difficultés: 'Did you ever consider that maybe many of those who have learning difficulties come from immigrant backgrounds, another first language? You know, there might be literacy problems, cognitive development problems related to language identity and culture because our programs are not meant for them. They are meant for another type of person. Consequently, we don't get the cognitive abilities that they have in their culture and perhaps we don't develop one base language well enough for them to acquire the cognitive skills for school success and academic achievement.' C'est comme si je

parlais d'un autre monde. Puis, c'est des professionnels d'éducation aussi. Alors, l'éducation francophone a beaucoup à offrir aux autres.

A Positive Climate

Although the francophone community has worked very hard to realize a degree of management and control of its schools, it was a common belief among participants that the beneficiaries of these efforts are not limited to members of the francophone community. According to participants, there is a belief that implementing a governance model for the francophone schooling has resulted in an overall governance structure which has the potential for empowering all individuals to have more autonomy in the education of their children. One individual expressed this in the following way.

> Je trouve que l'Alberta s'est beaucoup enrichie depuis qu'elle a intégré la gestion francophone. Pas rien que pour les Francophones, pas rien que pour elle-même, mais par rapport à toute l'ouverture sur l'éducation en générale pour tous ses citoyens. Je trouve qu'on vit un temps un peu privilégié en Alberta par rapport à la reconnaissance du fait français puis de la francophonie. On ne ressent pas la même offensive de leur part et défensive de notre part. Il y a beaucoup plus d'autonomie, puis on a beaucoup de choses à faire encore puis c'est à nous de le faire. Même si on n'a pas tout le plein champ, le champ qu'on a, on en a en masse à travailler encore. Puis, actuellement je crois que l'esprit de la province est plus ouvert. Alors, je trouve qu'on est à un temps favorable présentement.

Summary of Study Findings

This study set out to determine the current issues and examine, in part, how these issues are determined and addressed in Alberta's newly established autonomous francophone school jurisdictions.The data gathered for this study is reported in three major sections. These are the structures which evolved and which are currently in place to establish and support autonomous francophone schools in Alberta, the current issues as reported by the study participants, and the participants' thoughts on the future prospects for francophone education in Alberta.

In terms of the structures, this study found that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms gave the francophone community in Alberta what it believed to be a set of rights. With this belief and the will to survive as a community, the francophone community began

to organize and assert itself and eventually took its case for autonomous francophone schools to the Supreme Court of Canada. The plaintiffs won the case in March of 1990 commonly referred to as the Dickson Judgment or the Mahé Case. The province responded in 1994 by announcing sweeping changes to education, one of which was the creation of seven Francophone Education Regional Authorities. As of July of 1997, three of these Authorities were operating schools with three others each being managed by a Coordinating Council. The Red Deer region has not asked the Minister of Education to establish a Coordinating Council and therefore remains dormant. The many other structures along with a description of the way each of these acts to support the efforts of these newly established francophone school jurisdictions is also provided.

The second major section relates to the current issues. The data provided by the study's 12 participants gave rise to five major categories of issues.

The first category of issues refers to the community itself. The community was found to be very sparse in nature, even in urban settings. In addition to this, the franco-albertan community is made up of individuals from many sources including Québec, "les Francophones de souches," and from other provinces and countries. Given this diversity, it appears that the community is experiencing some difficulties. When these communities organized themselves to establish francophone schools in the various communities in Alberta, the result was such that consensus was very difficult to achieve. However, in the end schools were and continue to be established.

The second category of issues to be identified by study participants relates to establishing credibility. Because of their relative lack of history and the competition from French immersion programs and francophone programs offered by the majority boards, these newly established school jurisdictions are having difficulty establishing themselves as viable alternative schools. In addition to this, participants also noted that the overall societal status accorded the French language, especially in terms of its lack of presence in the economic world, contributed and continues to contribute to the difficulty in establishing credible schools. Another challenge raised by participants which relates to credibility has to do with developing "un projet éducatif." It was noted that with the current overall structure which oversees school programs, it becomes very difficult for educators to provide meaningful programs. The evaluation of students which is controlled entirely by the majority tends to drive programs independent of the francophone student's needs. Another factor mentioned was the difficulty in establishing a shared vision among all stakeholders in these francophone schools. It appears that the nature of the community and certain

members within this community make it difficult for educational leaders to work with these individuals to agree upon and establish a common vision and get on with the task of building credible francophone schools.

The third category to be raised relates to resources. In terms of funding, participants suggested that the current levels of funding, although they might be somewhat higher on an individual basis than that provided majority students, are inadequate. They maintain that even with the additional federal funding, these francophone school jurisdictions cannot offer equitable programs. The reasons cited relate to the number of students enrolled in these schools as well as the whole structure which exists for the majority students. One of the ways in which these francophone school jurisdictions might have to cope is by maximizing the resources available. Among strategies suggested were working with other provinces in areas of program and materials development as well as sharing resources among school jurisdictions. Another strategy suggested was the possibility of reducing the administrative structure which has been established to govern and operate these autonomous schools. Another finding in this area relates to the role of other stakeholders in providing educational services. Participants stressed that francophone schools cannot provide an education without the support of the home, community, and ultimately, the majority.

The fourth category has to do with enrollments. Given the presence of French immersion programs and the linguistic deficiencies in many francophone minority children, it becomes extremely difficult to compete for students, especially when many parents believe that immersion programs are suited to the needs of their children. The second concern relating to enrollments has to do with retention, especially at the secondary level. Because of the social needs of students and the limited program offerings in francophone schools as well as the belief of many parents and students that studying in French at the secondary level will compromise their future, a significant number of students transfer out of francophone schools at the secondary level.

The last category of current issues raised by participants relates to management and control of francophone schools. Given the omnipresent nature of the majority on those structures which were established to see Francophones manage and control their own schools, participants question the actual degree of management and control that the francophone minority actually enjoys. Such issues as the lack real power over program development, language use in government, and the pressure to do the same as the majority

only in French all contribute to the overall sense of powerlessness among study participants.

The third section of the report on this study's findings relates to participants' reflections with respect to future prospects. Participants are assured by the notion that francophone schooling is entrenched in a set of rights and as a result, members of the community are affirming themselves to demand educational services designed to meet their needs. Although much work remains to be done in terms of recruiting and retaining students, especially at the secondary level, the quality of students' French is improving since autonomous francophone schooling has been established. As a result of this, participants encourage other language groups to press for their own autonomous educational institutions.

Concluding Remarks

Autonomous francophone schools are a recent phenomenon in Alberta. However, participants are already seeing the effects of these institutions as powerful agents which serve to protect the Francophone community from the forces of assimilation. Although participants were very thorough in sharing their concerns with these newly established school jurisdictions, this should not be interpreted to mean that these schools are not effective. When asked specifically if they had any advice for other language groups wishing to undertake a similar project, the response was unanimous in suggesting that these groups work toward seeking autonomy for their own schools.

CHAPTER IV

REFLECTIONS OF THE FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide readers with the researcher's reflections of the findings reported in the previous chapter in relation to the literature. To do this, I carried out an extensive review of the literature relating to the study findings reported in Chapter III. The study findings are organized into three main sections. These sections are the structures which are in place to support the establishment and continued development of autonomous francophone schools, the current issues identified by participants, and the participants' thoughts on the future prospects of francophone education in Alberta.

The Structures

Historically, basic education has been for the most part a provincial responsibility. Accordingly, many of the structures which evolved in each province tended to reflect the political will of the majority population. Given this context, structures which evolved in many Canadian provinces proved over time not to be in the interests of the francophone population living in a minority setting. In Alberta's case, it appears that the structures which evolved, also reflected the political will of the province's majority and consistent with the situation in other provinces, tended not to serve the interests of the francophone minority.

According to Churchill, Frenette and Quazi (1985), the structures which do evolve determine in large part the fate of the any group living in a minority situation. They claim that when structures which do not favour the interests of the minority group evolve, the minority group is eventually marginalized and excluded from the mainstream and this gives rise to feelings of isolation (p.105). Once this feeling of isolation occurs, Churchill et al maintain that it then becomes extremely difficult for the minority population to organize itself to counter the effects of repressive structures on such aspects as language and cultural maintenance (p.106).

In Alberta, the structures governing minority language education were, until very recently, not very tolerant of minority groups managing and controlling their own education. This lack of tolerance, it appears, was not limited to schooling. In the report "École bilingue ou unilingue pour les Franco-Albertains?" Résumé du premier rapport descriptif., it is mentioned that the municipal laws in effect at that time required that all

candidates who were interested in running for political office be proficient both in spoken and written English (1974, p.13). A similar incident at the provincial level occurred as late as 1987 when Léo Piquette, an elected member of the Legislative Assembly, attempted to use French in the Alberta Legislature. The result of such legislation is that Francophones and other minority groups tend to be governed by laws and structures in which they potentially did not have a full voice. As such, Francophones and other minorities are often relegated to a diminished political and legislative status.

The French language, however, did enjoy renewed status with the passing of the Official Languages Act in 1969. Shortly thereafter, with the French immersion phenomenon, came the expansion of French language programs across the country. Although welcomed by both Francophones and a segment of the majority population, it became evident to some members of the francophone community that these programs were designed to benefit the Anglophones, not the Francophones. In fact, some members of the francophone community quickly saw these programs as major contributors toward the linguistic and cultural assimilation of the francophone minority ("École bilingue ou unilingue," 1974, p.17).

Although the country was proclaimed officially bilingual with the passing of the Official Languages Act in 1969, this legislation seemed to accomplish very little to protect the francophone minority from the ravages of assimilation. Without its own schools, Francophones in Alberta and other provinces could not provide the education which was needed to complete that which was being provided in the home. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which was adopted in 1982 attempted to provide a structure at the national level which would address this issue. However, as history has shown, the provinces resisted and it was not until the Dickson Judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada that the intent of section 23 of the Charter was clearly spelled out ("Province of British Columbia, Minority," 1991). This judgment obliged "the Province of Alberta and many other provinces of Canada [to] adopt new legislation in the field of education for Francophones" (French Language Working Group, 1991, p.iii). As such, the Dickson Judgment confirmed the interpretation of minority groups to the majority that the francophone minority does indeed have a right to establish, manage and control its own schools. However, it was not until 1994 that the Province of Alberta responded to the directives of the Dickson Judgment and the pressures from the francophone community by amending the 1988 School Act. This amended School Act does provide the structure required by the francophone minority to exercise a degree of management and control over the education of its children. However, do the combined efforts of home and school

provide a sufficient environment to protect the francophone minority from the forces of assimilation? Churchill et al (1985) suggest that municipal and provincial governments will have to look at expanding services available in the minority language to support what the school does. Without services in the minority language in other sectors, the status of the language is not appreciably enhanced (p.143). Accordingly, it appears that while altering the structures governing education may be an important step in preserving the minority language and culture, it may only represent the beginning. Additional work may have to be done to expand the level of services being provided to truly raise the status of the French language to the point where it is perceived as a legitimate language as intended by the Federal government in this officially bilingual country.

Current Issues

In carrying out a review of the literature relating to the issues identified in this study, I attempted to focus on research carried out on francophone populations living in a minority setting. In so doing, I found that a significant number of studies were done in francophone communities in Ontario during the 1980s. I also found that there is a growing interest in this area of research in Alberta and Manitoba. Although western Canada may represent a different reality from Ontario, I believe that the experience of living in a minority situation has certain similarities which may transfer from one context to another. It is in light of this belief that I accept and incorporate some of the findings coming from studies completed in other provinces.

In reviewing the related literature, I found that much of the research touched on many issues similar to those found in this study. The discussion which follows is organized around the five major issues identified in this study. These are the community, establishing credibility, resources, enrollments, and issues relating to the degree of management and control.

The Community

A review of the literature on francophone communities situated in a minority setting provided insights into four aspects of that experience. These are the role that history plays in today's community, the effects of a sparse population, the minority complex, and the expectations of the francophone community.

The Role of History

According to Godbout (1993), a community is in part the coming together of individuals who have shared a common set of experiences in the past and for whom these experiences have a significant role in determining the way in which these individuals actively create an identity as well as a linguistic and cultural reality. He expresses this notion in the following passage.

> [Notre identité] "est ainsi celle d'un soi instrui par les oeuvres de la culture qu'il s'est appliquées en lui-même" (Ricoeur, 1985, p.356). Cette "mise en intrigue" du récit de chacun (et éventuellement du récit collectif) est déterminée par la fiction et l'histoire telle que nous l'avons vécue ou apprise (interprétée). La façon dont nous configurons nos antécédents dans le temps joue donc un rôle primordial dans la façon dont nous allons développer notre récit, la façon dont nous allons refigurer ce passé dans notre présent, autant dire la façon dont nous allons activement créer et manifester actuellement notre identité, notre réalité, linguistique et culturelle, aussi bien individuelle que communautaire. (p.115)

In looking at the make-up of the franco-albertan community, Godbout (1993) might offer an explanation for the findings in this study. In the first instance, this study found that one of the main barriers to maintaining a strong vibrant francophone community is the fact that as a population, the franco-albertan community represents approximately 2,5% of the population and further, that the population is sparsely distributed. In demographic terms, therefore, this makes it very difficult for members of this community to be exposed to and nourished by relevant texts which will enhance the development of their francophone linguistic and cultural identity. Accordingly, the linguistic and cultural identity which does eventually develop in many communities may be eroded by exposure to "texts" coming from the majority group. In addition, members of a minority community are often at the same time members of the majority community. Time spent interacting with the larger, often more powerful majority community, also contributes to the evolution of the minority group's language and cultural identity.

Godbout (1993) also brings out the notion that history plays a vital role in determining the present. In Alberta's francophone community, this study found that the present community is made up of multiple sources each with its own unique history. Some are the offspring of early pioneers, others come from Québec where Francophones live for

the most part in a majority situation, and still others immigrate from countries where French may represent a very different set of meanings. Given this reality, the notion that the francophone community is experiencing some difficulty in coming together to realize a common vision for a project like francophone schools is not unexpected. For some, the Catholic Church had a significant role in the social and cultural development of the francophone community and therefore should still have a role in education ("École bilingue ou unilingue," 1974). For others who may come from another province or country, attitudes towards the involvement of the Catholic Church in education may be very different. The same holds true for language. For some, teaching the French language is a very normative process which means ensuring that the learner subscribes to a rigid set of words and rules whereas for others, it means developing and incorporating the local language into a larger set of linguistic rules. Examples which could be used to illustrate differing and often divergent views within the community are many. Of importance, however, is that the multiple understandings held within the francophone community may be explained by the fact that its membership is diverse with multiple histories being represented and as such, individual members may share very little in common besides a linguistic code.

The Effects of a Sparse Population

Although overall provincially Francophones represent approximately 2.5% of the population, there remain today some communities in Alberta where Francophones represent a significant percentage of the population. Communities such as Falher, Girouxville, Saint Paul, and Plamondon are such examples. However, as reported in this study, even in these communities, such factors as urbanization, media, intercultural marriages, and the decreased use of French in the business sector are threatening the survival of the language. On the issue of language use in the business sector, Mougeon and Heller (1985) found in one of their studies that "the extent to which French plays a significant socio-economic role will influence French language maintenance or shift to English among Francophones" (p.13). It appears, therefore, that the business community does have some influence in the future of the francophone community, especially in these rural francophone communities.

Another issue relates to the challenge of providing attractive educational services over large sparsely populated areas. In Alberta, given the way in which the province is divided into the seven regions for the purposes of French first language education, providing attractive educational services for the community remains a challenge. In the first instance, consistent with research findings from Frenette (1984, p.4) and Martel (1993,

p.756), distance is a major deciding factor for choosing a school. The result, even in urban areas, is such that parents will often consider distance as a more important criterion for school selection than language of instruction (Frenette, p.4). In Alberta, the result is such that in many of the schools established to date, enrollments are rather small. Based on the assumption that the number of educational programs and services is dependent in part on numbers, francophone schools in Alberta appear to be experiencing similar problems to francophone schools in Ontario. According to Courte (1988, p.5), multi-grade classrooms, the grouping together of students with differing linguistic abilities, and difficulties in retaining numbers at the secondary level are but some of the challenges francophone boards have to face when trying to provide services in areas with sparse francophone populations. The result is that it becomes difficult to establish credible programs which can successfully attract sufficient numbers to provide even more choice for the francophone student.

The minority complex

According to Godbout (1993), schooling practices of the francophone minority during the first half of this century are in large part responsible for the state in which this community currently finds itself. He claims that textual materials used in the schools did not value Francophones. In addition to this, the predominant language of instruction in most Alberta schools was English. The combined effects of the textual materials used as well as being schooled in English resulted in an overall personal loss of a franco-albertan identity for the vast majority of students. The overall weak identity within the franco-albertan community today is a direct result of these schooling practices (p.126). On the same issue, Mahé (1993) maintains that members of today's youth continue to suffer from a weak cultural identity because they, for the most part, were not taught a version of history which values the francophone people nor did they receive a foundation in literature which would have contributed to the development and maintenance of a francophone cultural identity (p.155). For the vast majority of Franco-Albertans who are not recent immigrants to the province, it appears that lived school experiences eroded the collective cultural identity of the francophone community and are in part responsible for the inability of many of today's parents to pass on their culture to their children (Parent, 1993, Cummins, 1985).

The context in Alberta is such that the dominant language is English. In this study, it was also found to be the dominant and preferred language for many francophone parents and their children. According to Frenette (1988), when two language groups co-exist in a situation where the two languages do not share equal status, the dominant language is more than likely to become the preferred language. This, according to Godbout (1993, p.112), is

especially the case if at the individual level, members of the community are not properly rooted in their own language and culture and is especially noticeable when members of a minority group will not use the minority language in public for fear of being noticed and also of offending members of the majority (Frenette, 1988, p.16). Another common characteristic of Francophones living in a minority situation is that they cannot adjust their speech to a more standard French when the situation demands it. The result, therefore, is that speakers will often resort to switching to their dominant language, which in most cases, is English (Mougeon & Canale, 1977, pp 14-15).

In terms of implications for schooling of today's young Francophone living in a minority situation who is of Franco-Albertan descent, Leduc (1996, p.16) makes the following observation.

> Si cet élève choisissait d'étudier dans la langue de la majorité, il subirait l'ordre naturel des événements et du même coup accepterait, même si cette acceptation est souvent inconsciente...l'idée de l'assimilation des minorités francophones et la sienne par conséquent. Ce geste sous-entend l'acceptation, pour lui, que sa culture est inférieure et moins prestigieuse que celle de la majorité et qu'il est préférable de conformer.

The fact that approximately only 10% of eligible students today actually chose a francophone school may, in part, be a result of the educational conditions to which the previous generations have been subjected. The overall erosion of French language proficiency and loss of cultural identity may go some way to explaining minimal interest in francophone schools by some Franco-Albertans.

Community Aspirations and Social Changes

The francophone community in Alberta has undergone many profound changes in recent years. Such phenomena as urbanization, intercultural marriages, advances in communication, transportation, media services, and the declining influence of the Catholic Church all have contributed to profoundly altering the franco-albertan community as we knew it during the first half of this century ("École bilingue ou unilingue," 1974, p.9). The first institution to be affected by these societal changes was the family. Mougeon and Hébrard (1974, p.52) in their study of language use in francophone families in the early 1970s found that the use of English as the language of communication among couples increased dramatically in younger couples. They found that in couples aged 55 years or older, French was used as the language of communication 89% of the time whereas only

33% of couples in the 20 to 34 age range used French as the language of communication in the home.

These societal changes also had a significant impact on the hierarchical structure of the community itself. During the 1960s and 1970s, there was an increase in the number of organizations serving the francophone community. However, it was also noted that participation in these organizations was reserved for the newly created elite whose membership was made up of urban middle class Francophones. This group was also referred to as the "mafia" ("École bilingue ou unilingue," 1974, p.12). So, with the increased exposure to English in the post-war society and the transformation of the francophone community into a class system, the family unit was essentially left alone in many cases to preserve the French language and the culture. The result, however, is that many families, especially the middle and lower classes, chose to integrate themselves with the larger society and consequently, did not escape the forces of assimilation (Hébert & Stibbins, 1993, p.76).

Although the rural franco-albertan community suffered in this new context, a new francophone community was emerging. This community was led by a new elite, some of whom were themselves recent immigrants to the province. Under their leadership, the new community not only pressed for its survival, it began to do what minority groups across the country were doing. It began to exert political pressure on the majority for autonomy and control of its institutions including its schools and for an increase in the level of services provided to the francophone minority. In other words, the francophone community which did emerge proved to be made up of rather sophisticated individuals and these individuals continued to push for what they understood to be their rights (Churchill et al 1985, pp 59-61).

The Societal Context in which Francophone Schools are Being Established

Although the francophone community did manage to obtain the right to establish, manage, and control its own schools, participants in this study suggested that it was extremely difficult to establish attractive programs. There appear to be some issues which are influencing how these programs are being perceived by the intended clientele. A review of the literature provided insights into four of the potential challenges found in this study relating to the development and establishment of credible francophone schools.

Economic Status of Language

One issue which exerted some influence on the overall credibility of francophone schools relates to the economic status of the French language. Consistent with the findings of this study, it appears that the French language does not enjoy equal status to English in economic sectors. In studying the social and historical context of francophone schooling in Ontario, Mougeon and Heller (1985) found that "assimilation into the dominant group may represent socioeconomic upward mobility" (p.11). Accordingly, from an individual perspective, maintaining one's language and culture might be perceived to be a barrier to succeeding in the economic sector.

Another indicator as to the diminished socioeconomic status of the French language relates to program offerings at the post-secondary level. In carrying out an analysis of programs offered in French in the university sector, Churchill found that programs offered "tend[ed] to be among the least economically rewarding" (In Mougeon & Heller, 1985, p.10). In looking at university programs available in the French language in Alberta, a similar situation exists. Of the programs leading to a professional designation such as Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Engineering, and Education, only the latter is available in French in Alberta's university sector. This may explain, in part, one of the findings in this study. Many parents are reticent to see their children complete their high school studies, especially the sciences, in the French language for fear that they may not be prepared for university studies.

Language Variation

Although francophone schools were established to meet the needs of the francophone student, there are many variations of language usage in Alberta and each of these variations tells us something about its user. The written language form tends to be perceived by many Francophones as being the standard to which one must strive to conform. In Alberta, however, the francophone community is made up of members from many linguistic and geographic sources. Those who have recently come from a province or a country where French is the majority language are perceived to have an excellent, even superior French. Those who are third or fourth generation Franco-Albertans may display a more regional vernacular woven with some English words. A third variation emerges when the individual has suffered a degree of linguistic assimilation. In this case, the individual has not been sufficiently exposed to a French language environment and the results are such that the linguistic code produced resembles that of a French immersion student

(Mougeon, Beniak & Canale, 1984, pp 72-73). In addition, there are those students who have a right to access a francophone school according to section 23 of the Charter but who have virtually no proficiency in the French language.

Given the linguistic variation in the potential clientele, the challenges are many. The first concern relates to the issue of language teaching itself. Mougeon and Heller (1985), Cazabon and Frenette (1982), and others found in their studies which examined the pedagogy used by minority language teachers that language teaching was for the most part a very normative process. Mougeon and Heller further found that teachers in general had very little regard for the sociolinguistic context and the vernacular used by students and proceeded to use a pedagogy more adapted to a majority context (p.46). Using such a pedagogy which is rooted in the perception that a local vernacular or a French code which shows some influence from the majority language is deficient, has the risk of alienating the minority language student (Canale, Frenette & Skitri, 1983, p.7; LeBlanc, 1987, p.73). Instead, minority language teachers ought to adapt their strategies and learning materials so as to make sure they do not diminish the value of the minority student's language and ultimately cause that student to question its overall value and eventually reject it (Mougeon, Bélanger, Heller, & Canale, 1984, p.74).

In terms of teaching practices, Leduc (1996) emphasizes the fact that a minority context does not provide teachers with linguistically homogenous students. It is incumbent upon practicing minority language teachers to modify their approach to ensure that all students who chose a minority language school will be permitted to succeed (p.13). On the issue of teacher training, Churchill et al (1985) noted in their study that institutions training French language teachers are very traditional in their methods and cut off from the reality of teaching in today's world (p.87). In light of these two studies, there appears to be a mismatch between the needs of the minority student and teaching methods which are currently being used in minority language schools.

Consistent with what was reported in this study, Francophones living in the Alberta minority language context do not necessarily all share the same language. This represents additional challenges for teachers who work with children in francophone schools as well as represents certain challenges for those individuals who develop programs of studies and teaching materials for these students.

The Programs of Studies

According to the literature, issues relating to language ought to underpin programs of studies offered in the French minority language school. In the first instance, there appears to be some philosophical differences with respect to the place that a local vernacular might have in a program of studies. As has already been discussed, researchers report that a majority of teachers tends to teach toward a more standard version of the French language. In so doing, the overall language development aspect of the program becomes very normative in nature and as a result, can lead to students developing feelings of inferiority. According to Frenette (1981, p.21), the establishment of minority language schools was in part intended to address this language development. In light of this, then, Frenette (p.18) suggests that educators might better meet the needs of the minority language student if they designed programs which build on the local vernacular rather than trying to eradicate it. To do this, he stresses the importance of educators and program designers learning the local vernacular so that "teachers [are able] to distinguish errors which are due in part to interference from English and those which are due to interference from popular forms of French" (p.18).

A second issue identified has to do with to the breadth of language used in francophone minority language schools. According to Frenette (1988, p.17) and Mougeon and Heller (1985, p.36), the language used in the classroom is rather narrow, restricted and highly predictable in nature. In addition, Frenette's (1991, p.17) research indicated that in many cases, the teacher dominated the learning environment and as such provided little time for the student to practice or use the language related to the program delivered. This, according to Frenette (1988, p.17), offers an explanation as to why an anglo-dominant student who has a rather limited French language proficiency can succeed just as well as a franco-dominant student.

Another issue concerning language use in the program offered in the French minority language school relates to the amount of time devoted to instruction in each of the two languages: French and English. As previously mentioned, Mougeon and Canale (1977) found that professional and upper middle class parents tended to prefer French as the language of instruction for all subjects with the notable exception of English. Mixed couples and working class parents, on the other hand, tended to prefer a reduced amount of instruction in the French language with English being the preferred language of instruction for science and technical courses (p.10). However, a study examining the effect of the

language of instruction on student achievement found that "plus le français est utilisé comme langue d'enseignement, mieux les élèves réussissent en français comme matière académique" (Centre de recherches du Collège Universitaire de Saint-Boniface, 1976, p.141). In this same study, it was found that student results in English were not affected by the amount of time devoted to instruction in the English language (p.141). A possible explanation for this might be that in a minority situation, students are exposed to the many language registers of the majority language outside of school. This may act as a compensatory factor for learning the majority language. However, because of the limited exposure to French in the larger community, the reverse may hold true. As a result, increasing the time students spend in the minority language may explain the correlation with student achievement in French.

Multiple clienteles

Although minority language schools in Alberta were established for Francophones, it is becoming evident to educators that French language proficiency varies greatly from one student to the next. At the primary level, students who are anglo-dominant require "un program de francisation" where students undergo intensive language training before joining the franco-dominant students. In this way, the franco-dominant student's language and cultural development is not compromised (Mougeon & Canale, 1977). Another reason for separating students according to language dominance has to do with the teacher. Frenette (1988, p.17) found that in a classroom where both anglo-and franco-dominant students were grouped together, the teacher tended to modify his or her language and teaching methods to accommodate the student with the weaker French language skills. As such, grouping multiple clienteles together for the purposes of instruction may prove problematic for the franco-dominant student, especially in communities where assimilation has taken its toll. Francophones in western Canada have already experienced this in the early 1970s when French immersion programs were implemented. Then, they might exercise caution before replicating this experience in their own schools.

Resources and Support Systems

The legal structure which permitted the establishment of francophone schools enabled the formation of the seven francophone authorities in Alberta. The level of service provided by these schools is, however, largely dependent upon the resources and support systems available to the various stakeholders involved. This section provides an overview

of issues found in the existing literature which relate to the availability of resources and support systems in francophone schooling as well as the role of the various stakeholders.

Resources

In terms of resources, there appears to be a common theme in the literature relating to the quality and variety of resources available. On the issue of quality, some concerns were raised with the practice of developing materials for multiple clienteles. For example, Mougeon and Beniak (1987a) noted that in many provinces, because of fiscal pressures, the same programs of studies as well as accompanying student material are often developed for both francophone and French immersion programs. The result is often such that the programs of study and accompanying material serve neither clientele very well. In their study, they suggest as an alternative that provinces might better serve the needs of both clienteles if they cooperated and developed programs of study and accompanying materials for each of these two clienteles (p.9).

Another area of concern with respect to resources has to do with diagnostic materials. It was noted that instruments designed to measure intelligence, learning difficulties, and other areas pertaining to a child's development were available in both French and English. However, the difficulty comes when practitioners use these instruments on minority children. Canale, Frenette and Skitri (1983) claim that the instruments currently available for measuring a child's development are not valid because "the previous learning experiences of minority groups have not been adequately assessed" (pp 9-10). In practical terms, given the range of language dominance in children who attend Alberta's francophone schools, assessing a child within the limited availability of instruments coupled with limited understandings of the needs of children in a minority situation presents additional challenges for practitioners.

The last issue identified in the area of resources relates to the tendency to develop relatively inflexible materials. Courte (1988) found that the material developed tended to assume a homogenous clientele. He questions this basic assumption. He maintains that when working with children in a minority setting, the practitioner is often faced with a group of students, each with his or her own unique individual needs. Accordingly, he supports the findings of this study that materials have to be intrinsically flexible in order to permit the teacher to easily adapt them to a variety of student needs (p.8).

Support Systems

The main issue relating to support systems has to do with the inequity which exists in the level of support available to those individuals who work with English language programs as opposed to those who work with French minority language programs. Courte (1988) found that even in Ontario, which has the largest concentration of Francophones outside Québec, educators felt that they do not have access to support systems provided to English educators. These include services provided by psychologists, teacher consultants and other specialists who have specific training to work with minority language children as well as the ability to work in the French language (p.4). In this same study, Courte suggests that there is a need to establish a structure which would regroup services provided to minority language educators. In addition to this, he suggests that this structure could also oversee the development of materials for minority language programs (p.7). The concept proposed here is very similar in nature to the consortium that participants in this study want to establish. A consortium could in essence provide a provincial structure which would provide a set of supports and services designed to serve the needs of those who work with Alberta's francophone students. Given that in this province funding is largely determined by the number of students being served, this may provide a way to avoid duplication of services thereby maximizing the use of limited funding.

Role of Stakeholders

Educating children requires the work and cooperation of many individuals. Educating the francophone child living in a minority situation also requires the work and cooperation of many individuals and stakeholders. A review of the extant literature provided insights into the roles and responsibilities of the following stakeholders previously identified in the study findings: the home, the school and its employees, the teachers, the community, and the majority. The following is a description of the role and responsibility of each of these stakeholders as found in the literature.

The role of the home. Before examining the role of the home, it may be of interest to review some of the reasons francophone parents living in a minority situation might consider a francophone school. Mougeon, Brent-Palmer, Bélanger, and Cichocki (1982, p.78) in a study examining spoken language in a minority setting found that parents chose to send their children to a francophone school to give them maximum exposure to the French language and culture, and secondly, that parents wanted their children to be bilingual. It is this second reason which is rather intriguing. Does it imply that one of the

key roles of the school is to assume responsibility for the French language and the family and other agents are to assume responsibility for, say, English? Whatever the expectations, the literature does provide some insights as to the effects of home language use on the language acquisition and cultural identity in the child.

In the first instance, there is a sufficient body of literature to conclude that the linguistic and cultural environment provided by the home is clearly reflected in the child's linguistic behaviour elsewhere, including the school (Mougeon et al, 1982, p.79). In a study which examined school choice at the secondary level, Tardif (1995) found that the language of the home did influence school choice. She found that the more the French language dominated the home, the more likely were members from these families to participate in activities organized by the francophone community. And, the more involved that these families were in this community, the greater were the chances that these students would choose a francophone school at the secondary level (p.327).

In families where English is the language of preference, several studies found that these student's French language proficiency was not as developed as that of their peers who came from homes where French was the preferred language. Mougeon and Beniak (1987a) found that these students' French language skills resembled more the French language skills of French immersion students than native-like proficiency (pp 1 & 11). In addition to influencing language proficiency, it appears that the home is also a principal agent of cultural transmission. Leduc (1996), Landry and Allard (1987), and Desjarlais (1983) found that language and culture were inseparable and consequently, that students who come from homes where the language of preference is English are at the greatest risk of taking on the majority language and culture. Accordingly, the home is seen to have a vital role as an agent of cultural and linguistic transmission and because of this, can either act to prevent the assimilation of its members or contribute to it.

For the intercultural family where one parent is francophone and the other is either anglophone or prefers another language, the results appear to be similar to those where English is the language of the home. According to Mougeon and Beniak (1987b), children raised in a bilingual home environment also tend to develop French language patterns found in French immersion students. On this same issue, Mougeon and Beniak (1987a) and Mougeon and Canale (1977) further found that children from mixed-marriage homes eventually tended to prefer the English language and that the older the child got, the more profound this preference.

Although the role of the home cannot be ignored, there is some research that tends to suggest that the home's influence is somewhat limited. Mougeon and Heller (1985) found that even in homes where the parents speak French to the children, the children will seldom speak French to their siblings and their friends. This "provides a clear illustration of the influence which the wider sociolinguistic environment exerts on the younger generations of linguistic minorities" (Mougeon & Heller, p.33). This tends to support the findings of this study in that the responsibility for educating the francophone child in a minority setting is not just the school's, but instead becomes the responsibility of all stakeholders who have an interest in the preservation of the French language and culture.

The role of the school. Before articulating the outcomes and expectations of the francophone school, the community must have a shared set of understandings with respect to its role. Given the nature of the francophone community in a minority setting, reaching a consensus or agreement as to the role of its schools can become somewhat of a challenge. In studying the role of the French minority language school in Ontario's francophone community, Heller (1985) found that the multiple backgrounds and different historical understandings represented in the francophone community made it very difficult for this community to agree on a common vision (pp 8-9). It is interesting to note that participants in this study expressed the same concern on the issue of agreeing on and articulating a common vision.

Although there appears at the community level to be some difficulty in obtaining agreement on a common vision in the area of francophone schooling, a review of the literature did provide some insights as to the national goals of these schools. Mougeon and Heller (1985) state in a study which examined the social and historical contexts of francophone schooling "that one of the most important goals (if not the most important one) [of] Ontario's French language schools is to ensure or, more realistically, to contribute to the preservation of [the] French language and culture in Ontario" (p.1). In a report to the Minister of Education, the task force studying the issue of minority language education stated that

> strengthening the francophone presence in this Province will increase British Columbia's sense of belonging within a bilingual Canada. Similarly, when Francophones in the rest of the country see the development of a complete minority language education system in Canada's westernmost province, their sense of identity with the country as a whole will also strengthen (Province of British Columbia, 1991, p.55).

The common theme in both of these studies seems to be such that a visible francophone presence is indeed important for the provinces given the bilingual nature of our country. In light of the unresolved constitutional debate at the national level, it appears that the provinces cannot ignore the importance of francophone schools for the preservation of the francophone community in a minority setting and the role that these schools might have in national unity.

In terms of the more specific roles and responsibilities of the francophone school, a review of the literature provided some insights. In describing what she believed to be the role of the francophone school in a minority setting, Leduc (1996) states that these schools are in place to respond to the rights outlined in section 23 of the Charter. In addition to this, she describes the function of linguistic maintenance and cultural transmission. She summarizes these roles and responsibilities in the following passage.

> L'école française est d'abord un milieu de vie. Elle existe pour et par les bénificiaires et les ayants droit de l'article 23. C'est un lieu de partage dans lequel les élèves ainsi que tous les membres de la communauté sont invités à partager leurs intérêts et leur culture. Les parents des élèves de même que les membres de la communauté sont intégrés à son processus décisionnel. L'école assure le maintien et la promotion de la langue de même que la transmission de la culture. Elle est le reflet de la culture, donc des valeurs de la communauté minoritaire (p.14).

Although many researchers including Hébert (1993), Frenette (1991), and Tardif (1995) supported the importance of the francophone school in linguistic and cultural transmission. These and other researchers noted that the school could not be expected to accomplish this task without the continued support of other key stakeholders. Mougeon and Canale, (1977) Mougeon and Heller (1985) and others have found that one of these key stakeholders is undoubtedly the home. In homes where the belief was such that it was the school's responsibility to teach the French language, these researchers found that students could only be expected to achieve intermediate levels of French language development. In other words, although these children had attended minority language schools, these students' language proficiency was consistent with results found in second language programs (Mougeon & Heller, 1985, p.17). However, not to diminish the importance of minority language schools, Théberge (1987) found that "sans un système d'éducation qui assure la transmission de la langue et des valeurs culturelles, les minorités sont vouées à l'assimilation" (p.21).

In addition to the multiple roles and responsibilities of the francophone school in a minority setting discussed thus far, perhaps one of the most profound outcomes is that it promotes a sort of separatism (Frenette, 1988). In his study in which he examined the educational needs of Francophones in a minority situation, Frenette found that a crucial outcome of the francophone school was to ensure that its clientele felt apart from the majority. He maintains that by taking on an overt role in asserting the uniqueness of the minority language and culture, the school raises the visibility of the community and that by doing this, reminds the majority that the minority exists and as such, will act to ensure its continued existence. He maintains that until this outcome is achieved, the minority student is vulnerable to being assimilated by the majority group (p.16).

The role of teachers and school employees. There appears to have been very little research carried out on the role of school employees in the French minority language school. The little research found in the area tended to focus on the area of teacher training. Heller (1989) suggests that most professionals working with francophone students in a minority setting may have been trained in institutions preparing French language teachers to teach in a French majority setting. She further suggests that many of the resources used during preservice and inservice training were designed for the francophone student living in a majority rather that a minority situation (p.7). In Alberta's case, this may be somewhat different because of the teacher training programs offered by the University of Alberta's Faculté Saint-Jean. However, because of the recent emergence and establishment of francophone schools in Alberta, Faculté Saint-Jean may need to reexamine its teacher training programs to ensure that they are based on a pedagogy which is ground in a body of research relating to the specific needs of the multiple clienteles attending Alberta's francophone schools.

The role of the community. When examining the role of the community in francophone schooling, the relationship of the francophone community with the majority community becomes important. Mougeon et al (1982) and Mougeon and Canale (1977) studied the relationship between demographic strength in several communities and language preference and dominance among francophone students. Both of these studies confirmed that in communities such as Hawksbury, Ontario where the francophone community represents 86% of the population, francophone students showed a strong language preference for French, both in school and in the larger community. However, in communities such as Sudbury, Ontario where the demographic strength is at approximately 27%, students showed a strong language preference for English, both in and out of school.

These studies clearly demonstrate the influence the community can exert on language choice among members of a minority community, even in the school setting.

In the preservation of the French language and culture, the community and its various institutions must assume an active role in supporting the efforts of the school. In studying language use among francophone students living in Ontario, Heller (1989), found that the most important factor determining language use among these students was the number and quality of experiences provided by the francophone community (p.5). Frenette (1981) conducted a study relating to French language mastery and found similar results. He found that "the opportunity to use French outside the school setting seems to be an important factor influencing the degree of linguistic mastery of the student's mother tongue, independently of the fact that the student attends a French-language school" (p.13).

These studies further support the notion found in this study that the community in a minority setting must consciously maintain and promote its language and its culture if it wants its members to survive the forces of assimilation. As this study found, the francophone school cannot be expected to provide its students with the linguistic tools and the identity necessary to resist the forces of assimilation. In addition to this, one must consider that in Alberta, the demographic strength of the francophone community is very weak in relative terms, even in those communities where it seems to be strong.

The role of the majority. Although the survival of French minority language schools may be in part decided by the number of section 23 students, the majority community retains much of the power necessary to determine, in large part, their future. Heller (1988), in studying the francophone school in a minority setting, found that an unequitable distribution of resources among language groups and an unequal availability of services in the minority language resulted in a deficient cultural and linguistic capital for the minority language group. As a result, the minority group is often in a situation where it cannot compete because the knowledge, the behaviours, and the artifacts of the majority group are often perceived to be superior and therefore more attractive. For the francophone student living in a minority situation, resisting the linguistic and cultural capital offered by the majority can, therefore, mean a personal sacrifice.

Enrollments

One of the major issues faced by Alberta's newly established francophone jurisdictions relates to enrollments. The current structure is such that funding at the jurisdictional level is largely determined by the number of students being served.

Accordingly, staffing, resources, and ultimately the establishment and survival of individual schools are all driven by student enrollments. A review of the literature on the subject of enrollment in francophone schools in a minority setting identified the following areas for discussion: economic viability and admission policies, demographics, students at risk, the amount of English language instruction, French immersion programs, and student retention.

Economic Viability and Admission Policies

Before discussing issues related to enrollments in francophone schools, it might be wise to reexamine section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms found in Appendix A of this study. Very briefly, section 23 provides a set of criteria by which a parent can determine his or her eligibility to exercise the right to have his or her child[ren] educated in a publicly funded minority language school. It must be noted, however, that section 23 (1) (a) is the only category which stipulates that the parent still has a proficiency in the minority language. Even at that, the clause uses the term "still understood," a passive form of language proficiency as opposed to say "still spoken," an active form of language proficiency. The other categories which include section 23 (1) (b) and section 23 (2) make no mention of the parent's language proficiency. In other words, section 23 appears to be very generous in its intent and in Alberta's context, makes it possible for the francophone student who is franco-dominant to be in a minority situation within a francophone school, especially when one considers that only one parent has to qualify under section 23.

In light of the above, the reality in many francophone schools is such that there is often a tension which exists between maintaining a francophone ambiance and the pursuit of students for economic viability (Heller, 1985, p.14) (Mougeon & Beniak, 1987b, p.5). Parents whose children are franco-dominant maintain that they have invested a lot of time and energy to ensure that their children are proficient in the French language and culture and reject inclusive admission policies because they feel that they are the ones who have the most to lose (Heller, 1989). They fear that admitting children who do not have a preference for French in a society which is anglo-dominant will have assimilating effects on their children (Heller, 1985, p.16) (Mougeon & Beniak, 1987b, p.6). On the other hand, as this study has found, it becomes very difficult to offer an overall program which is attractive, especially for the secondary student, when the number of students is limited. It is interesting to note, however, that Churchill et al (1985) found in their study on the issue that Francophones tended to accept Anglophone students into their schools until they

become economically viable. Once these schools reach this point, parents tend to push to gallicize the school and in so doing, make the Anglophones feel less welcome (p.89).

The provisions made in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the directives of the Dickson Judgment do provide the opportunity for francophone schools to admit a multitude of clienteles from the franco-dominant to the anglo-dominant. Given that one of the fundamental reasons that these schools are being established is to promote the linguistic and cultural duality of this country and to protect minorities from further assimilation, care must be taken to ensure that these institutions do not in themselves become the principal agents of assimilation of the very group they were established to protect. Given the vulnerability of the francophone minority, Mougeon et al (1984) suggest that an admission policy might better serve the interests of the minorities if it contained a test for assessing the attitudes of both the parents and the student (p.9). This might be a way of communicating to the parents the responsibility they have as partners for educating the francophone child in a minority setting.

Demographics

When examining the demographics of the francophone community living in a minority situation in Alberta and other parts of Canada, there appears to be some confusion with respect to numbers and general understandings as to the community's membership. On the one hand, researchers use the definition provided in section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to determine the population of the francophone community. When adhering to this notion, data provided by La Commission nationale des parents francophones suggest that there were approximately 21 825 students in Alberta who were eligible to access a francophone school during the 1996-1997 school year. Of this eligible population, 2 995 were enrolled in a francophone program, of which 1 691 students or 56.5% were enrolled in one of Alberta's three newly established francophone school jurisdictions currently operating schools. Based on these data and the assumption that francophone schools were established to provide educational services to the eligible population, one can conclude that only 13.7% of eligible students are enrolled in a francophone program and that 7.7% of eligible students are being educated in one of the three newly created francophone school jurisdictions operating schools.

The confusion appears to be in the assumption that homogenous schools are designed to attract and provide educational services for all eligible students. However, in considering this assumption, one has to wonder how realistic this expectation is. In a study

examining the role of the francophone school in the franco-ontarian community, Heller (1985) found that only 30% of families in Ontario who sent their children to French language schools used French as the language of communication in the home (pp 6-7). Although no data were available for language use in Alberta homes, one has to be cognizant of the overall potential effects on the school's ambiance should francophone schools attract a population where French was used in only 30% of families. The overall effects on the franco-dominant student could be such that the francophone school might contribute to the assimilation of the minority population.

Students at risk

When considering the potential population, it is perhaps safe to assume that most of the eligible students are indeed at risk of becoming assimilated into the majority population given that they are being educated in majority language schools. In attempting to understand school choice, Leduc (1996) suggests that one of the reasons that francophone schools only succeed in attracting a fraction of the eligible clientele is that the anglo-dominant section 23 student is oppressed by two groups: the English speaking majority and the French speaking minority. Therefore, in choosing an English majority school, this student is only at risk of being oppressed by one group (p.24). The challenge, therefore, appears to be that additional work has to be done by these autonomous francophone school jurisdictions to address the needs of these students at risk. Given the enrollment figures coupled by what Leduc (1996) suggests, francophone schools might want to reexamine the programs designed to meet the needs of these at risk students.

The need to learn English

A major omnipresent force in the Alberta context appears to be the common understanding among many section 23 parents that their children have to learn English. Although leaders within francophone schools and most community members agree themselves on the importance of learning English, it appears to be a common understanding among many section 23 parents that francophone schools will not effectively prepare students for the labour market. Mougeon and Canale (1977, p.11) and Mougeon and Hébrard (1974, p.54) found in their research examining the franco-ontarian population, that working class Francophones had poor English language proficiency whereas the professional and upper class Francophones had excellent English language skills. Accordingly, working class Francophones tended to blame their poor English language skills for their lower socio-economic status. Carey (1987, p.118) found similar results in

studying the debate on francophone and French immersion schools in western Canada. He found that most parents preferred a bilingual or English language education over a francophone education because of the perception that English language proficiency is a prerequisite to achieving economic prosperity. Perhaps the most startling of findings on this issue is what Robichaud (1987) reported. He found that unilingual francophone parents from Québec living in a minority situation were more attracted to English language programs for their children than francophone programs. Again, the reason cited for this attraction relates to the economic status of the English language (p.50). It appears that for a large percentage of section 23 parents, economic considerations play a vital role in determining school choice. It further appears that these economic considerations tend to outweigh other reasons for selecting a school such as linguistic and cultural identity.

The French Immersion Program

In looking at French language programs which were available for the minority language child whose French language skills were deficient, Mougeon et al (1984) found an interesting correlation between the demographic strength of the francophone community and the number and nature of French language programs offered. He found that in demographic terms, the weaker the representation of the francophone community, the greater the tendency for section 23 parents to chose an immersion program over a francophone program. He attributes this phenomenon in part to the lack of "classes d'accueil" within the francophone schools (p.5). Accordingly, choosing a French immersion program may be the result of a lack of adequate program offerings by a francophone school rather than the attractiveness of the French immersion program.

Another way to view the French immersion program is to consider its intent. According to Frenette (1988), the French immersion program is designed to serve the needs of non-francophone students by giving them a cultural supplement as well as a functional proficiency in the language (p.16). On the issue of language proficiency, Mougeon and Beniak (1987b) confirm the findings of other researchers by stating that graduates of French immersion programs can attain advanced, functional levels of French language proficiency rather than the once believed native like proficiency (p.4). Given the socioeconomic status related to the English and French languages and the cultural deficiencies in many preschool children of section 23 parents, it is perhaps not surprising that the great majority of these parents chooses a French immersion program in lieu of a francophone program.

So Why do They Leave?

According to the data provided by Alberta Education, the enrollments in francophone schools are weakest in the higher grades. One possible explanation for this is that these programs are just beginning and as such, the student population has not reached these higher grades. Another, and one which is supported by Tardif (1995), is that retention is an issue, especially at the secondary level for Alberta's newly established francophone school jurisdictions (p.328).

Although the reasons that students choose to leave a francophone school to attend a majority language school are no doubt personal, studies have found that the influencing factors are not that numerous. In the first instance, Tardif (1995) found that students cited social reasons for leaving (p.328). This appears to confirm the findings in this study where participants expressed a concern with the small numbers of students at the secondary level. Some participants were very understanding of the fact that some of their students were leaving the francophone school to attend a school with a larger student body which was better geared to meet their social needs.

Another reason cited in this study and confirmed in the literature relates to the issue of breadth of available programs. Tardif (1995, p.323) and Churchill et al (1985. p.288) found that as students progressed to the secondary level, the programs and courses required to meet their needs became more and more complex. Given that secondary francophone schools in a minority setting tend to have smaller numbers, offering a course selection which meets the needs of an often diverse population becomes economically unfeasible. In addition to this, a limited extra-curricular offering can also act as a deterrent to continuing in a francophone secondary school. Accordingly, it appears that many francophone students leave minority language schools at the secondary level because these schools do not offer programs which respond to their individual academic and personal needs.

Tardif (1995) also found that there was a relationship between the language of the home and school choice at the secondary level. In her study, she found that in those homes where French was used as the language of communication, the tendency was for the student to continue to study in a francophone school. However, in homes where French was used with less frequency or not at all, the tendency was for those students to withdraw and continue their secondary studies in the majority language school (p.323). This relationship in home language use and retention tends to support the notion that students of

parents who did not understand the role of the francophone school were those who tended to leave the school (Tardif, p.324). As has been reported in this study as well as others, it is important for both the home and the school in a minority situation to assume a complementary role in the overall education of the child. This, it appears, is equally as important at all levels; elementary as well as secondary.

According to Mougeon and Canale (1982), another very important reason cited by minority language students for leaving a francophone school for an English language school is due to the perception that French has a diminished status. In their study, they found that the status the French language had, at both the provincial and municipal levels of government as well as its limited use in the business world, influenced the overall economic value that the minority language student placed on the French language (p.7). Although Mougeon and Canale conducted their study in Ontario, the findings in this study are consistent with their findings. It appears, therefore, that the majority does have a lot of power in controlling the future of francophone schools simply by determining the level of French language use permitted in society, and thereby determining its status.

Autonomy and Societal Status

With the passing of the Official Languages Act in February of 1969, the French language enjoyed a renewed status in Canadian society. At the federal level, employees were enrolling in French language training programs and at the school level, French immersion programs were being implemented across the country. According to Heller (1988), this sudden interest in the French language was instrumental in creating a new francophone middle class (p.17). For the first time, members of the francophone minority found themselves in a society which valued its members' language skills. At the federal level, many positions were declared bilingual in this new context and in the education sector, French language teachers were constantly in demand. Heller maintains that this changing environment thrust the francophone minority into a position where it shared power and the control of certain resources for the first time with the anglophone majority. She further suggests that because of this new status given to the French language, members of the anglophone majority displayed such an interest in learning the language because it was perceived as being a means to regaining the power and control it had lost to the francophone minority. This in part also explains why the immersion phenomenon was such a success (p.17).

The francophone minority continued to enjoy this new status well into the 1980s. However, it became evident that many of the resources provided under such programs as the Official Languages in Education were designed to help the majority, not the francophone minority. It was in this context that the francophone minority in Alberta attempted to establish its own autonomous francophone schools but was met with resistance by various school boards controlled by the majority, the provincial government, and the provincial judicial system as seen in the Purvis and Kerans Judgments. It appears that this reluctance to share power and control was experienced and continues to be experienced by the francophone minority in other provinces as well. In their study of the education system in Ontario, Churchill et al (1985) found that although the francophone minority was represented by an assistant deputy minister, this individual had no real decision making power. When compared to the power and decision making authority vested in the other assistant deputy ministers in the department, the individual representing the francophone minority interests could not act independently of the authority held by the majority (p.78). Another indicator which illustrates a reluctance by the majority to grant minority groups autonomy is the priority given to research on minorities. Cazabon (1996) maintains that this is another example which shows a deliberate attempt by the majority group to keep minorities "en marge de la société payante" (p.24).

This study also found a reluctance by the majority to share power with the francophone minority. The very fact that it took 12 years from the time the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was passed to actually altering the legislation to permit the francophone minority to manage and control its education is a clear indicator of this reluctance to share some power with the francophone community. In addition, the per pupil provincial funding levels provided to francophone schools are at the same levels provided to the majority student. The additional per pupil funding provided to francophone school jurisdictions is provided by the federal government, not the provincial government. The limited powers given provincial civil servants working in the area of French minority language education was also found to be a concern according to the participants in this study. These are but some of the indicators which tend to support the notion that although Francophones do have rights to a minority language education and that autonomous francophone school jurisdictions have been established, the anglophone majority is not relinquishing as much power as it could to the francophone minority so that this minority can truly govern its own education.

According to Landry (1993), there exists in society a social determinism which constantly threatens minority groups from reaching their full potential. He maintains that

> [l]e déterminisme social qui menace l'épanouissement des cultures minoritaires ne peut être contré que par un changement du social, c'est-à-dire par une augmentation des contacts sociaux appropriés, ce qui implique un accès accru à des institutions gérées par le groupe minoritaire qui pourront bâtir la détermination de survivre. À l'école, une pédagogie qui assure une conscientisation de ce déterminisme social est requise pour promouvoir et assurer cette détermination de reproduire sa culture et de sauvegarger son identité (p.889).

In light of what was found in this study, it appears that historically, the social determinism present within the majority served to create a context in which the aspirations of minority groups were not fully understood and supported. Although the societal context is changing, it is evident that the francophone minority will have to continue to work through its institutions to ensure that its children receive an education which will permit the minority group to survive. Given that schools potentially have a vital role in the transmission of language and culture, the francophone community might do well to make sure that the programs of studies provide students with the skills required to counter the social determinism which has as its goal a homogenous society. According to Landry (1985) francophone schools must prepare graduates who are "des individus autonomes, compétents dans leur langue, fiers de leur culture et sûrs de leur identité qui sauront à leur tour contribuer à la reproduction de leur communauté dans tous les secteurs qui sauront garantir sa vitalité" (p.21).

Future Prospects

In looking at the work of our leaders in education, "a fundamental premise...is that what we do about education today - our policies, our plans, our decisions - will have an impact upon the future of education" (Educational policy research centre at Syracuse, p.5). When looking at issues relating to governance of francophone schools, it becomes clear that many stakeholders are either directly or indirectly involved. In addition to this, it also appears that the policies which govern francophone schooling are the result of many competing forces which are rooted in a larger political context. At the international level, the presence of global economic forces, in recent years, has resulted in an increased interest in learning those skills required to increase relations with Pacific Rim countries. At the national level, the unresolved constitutional question appears to be undermining to some extent the efforts of the federal government to fully implement its own policies relating to bilingualism. At the provincial level, the general status accorded the French language within

a multicultural province appears to have an impact on the overall mindset of leaders. And, at the local level, although the structures are now in place with respect to francophone school governance, the issue of demographic strength and the participation rates of eligible children remain major concerns for many of the leaders involved.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of this chapter is to provide some suggestions for both practitioners and researchers. In terms of practice, the recommendations reflect study findings, the literature consulted for this study, as well as my own personal reflections as both a practionner and researcher. The recommendations for additional research also come from my own personal reflections in the area of francophone schooling. These recommendations identify some areas where additional theory might provide a philosophical basis for improved practice.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study, which are based on the understandings of the participants involved, provide valuable insights to potentially improve practice. Before discussing specific recommendations I would like to begin by discussing the general roles and responsibilities of the major stakeholders in French minority language education. Although the major responsibility for educating a child tends to be assigned to the school, the insights provided by this study suggest that for the francophone child in a minority setting, the school is but one of four essential partners required. Providing a child with the knowledge, behaviours, attitudes, and language required for cultural and linguistic transmission requires the unrelenting contribution of the home, the community, the school, as well as a contribution from the majority. The following recommendations are therefore not to be taken in isolation. They assume that these four partners work together in concert for the benefit of the francophone minority and ultimately, the larger Albertan community.

Recommendations for the Community

In this study, it was found that the nature of the community is such that it is not homogenous in nature. It was noted that its members come from many sources, with their own history, their own vernacular, and ultimately, their own sets of understandings with respect to the notion of community. This study also found that there exists a class structure within the community and further, that the community tends to be divided on many issues. The establishment of these newly created autonomous schools only served to illustrate the divisive nature of the community in many parts of Alberta. It is in light of this reality

reported by the participants in this study that the following recommendations are being made.

Putting Differences Aside

In order for a group to work together, it seems rather logical that the first item on the agenda might be to put aside any differences which might serve to separate the members of the group. Once this has been done, it may become much easier to focus on those elements which serve to unite members of the group and focus on setting the agenda. This, according to Rist (1996) is the first step involved in policy development. It appears that from the data gathered for this study that the francophone community as a whole is experiencing some difficulty with coming together and establishing an agenda. Without an agenda to determine the direction, it becomes very difficult for the community to contribute in a meaningful way to supporting the efforts of the other partners: the home, the school, and the majority. Accordingly, the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, the provincial organization regrouping the franco-albertan community, might consider as one of its initiatives a redefinition of the term community such that it focus on those features which serve to unite its membership and further, that it establish a plan of action to improve the image of the franco-albertan community to both its own members as well as to those from the English majority.

Becoming More Inclusive

One of the outcomes of section 23 of the Charter is that it defined in legal terms those who had access to minority language schooling. Although section 23 is generous in scope, the main purpose of being inclusive is to permit stakeholders to repair the damages to the minority communities caused by assimilation. However, in establishing the right of access in these terms, section 23 of the Charter tends to provide in legal terms, potential boundaries for redefining the francophone community. Given the nature of the francophone community in Alberta, is this possible?

According to Levasseur-Ouimet and McMahon (n.d.), individuals are born into a culture and choose to identify with this culture or choose to subscribe to another culture. According to this theory, if I am born from a section 23 parent or parents and want to become a member of the francophone community, the choice is mine as an individual. However, what happens if the community does not respect my choice? Am I a member or am I not ? I suspect that both the individual and the community determine membership. In this light, therefore, perhaps the community might redefine itself and in this process, alter

the understandings at the individual level with respect to what it means to be a community and to be inclusive of all members who choose to belong; not only in theory but in practice.

Empowering Parents

According to the findings of this study, it is evident that community efforts were instrumental in, utimately, establishing autonomous francophone schooling in Alberta. Since the structure permitting the formation of these schools was established, it appears that the community has withdrawn some of the energy it once designated towards the schools. Given the vital role that the community, parents, and the school all have in minority language education, the community might consider revisiting the support it currently gives its schools. One of these roles might be in working with parents whose children attend a francophone school so that parents can maximize the resources available and contribute to the French language and cultural development of their children. The school alone cannot provide the kind of parental support required especially when working with parents who have the attitude that language and cultural transmission is the school's role. As well, for those parents who are not francophone but who have rights according to section 23 of the Charter, the community might consider implementing a parental support system. The initiatives suggested here would further serve to unite community members thereby fostering community identity and ultimately, strengthening partnerships among home, school, community, and the majority.

Recommendations for School Jurisdictions

The recommendations found in this section will include those destined for personnel working at the many levels of the school jurisdiction. As such, some recommendations might be directed to those serving as principal or superintendent whereas others may be more appropriate for those working more at the policy level such as trustees. As well, it is recognized that role description varies from one jurisdiction to the next.

Recruitment and Promotion

One of the main concerns found in this study relates to the issue of recruitment and promotion. It appears that the main concern relates to the rather small enrollment in francophone schools. With the way in which funding is allocated in Alberta, one can appreciate the importance, from a business perspective, of increasing enrollments.

Francophone schools have succeeded in attracting approximately 10% of the eligible student population. In light of this, school jurisdictions and schools might reexamine the policies governing current recruitment and promotion practices. Is there a plan of action in place designed to address these issues? Who is assuming responsibility for recruitment and promotion? Is this being done at the school level? Jurisdiction level? Community level? It appears from this study that whatever is being done, there is a lack of an overall direction and plan of action in place to address this issue. Accordingly, it might be suggested that the community, parents and the school jurisdictions work together to agree on a plan of action which identifies measurable outcomes, indicators, resources required, responsible personnel, and a means for evaluating the level of achievement with such a plan of action. In addition to this, it might be considered in the current site-based management climate to ensure that schools address this issue in their school improvement plans. Having a district level employee attend to recruitment of students may give license to some school based administrators not to attend to this issue.

Another issue related to recruitment and enrollment relates to the multiple clienteles. Although section 23 of the Charter stipulates very clearly who has the right to access a minority language school, eligible students will not necessarily be dominant in the minority language. In light of this, programs offered, especially at the primary grades, have to be sensitive to the needs of the student. One criterion which might be considered for placing students in a program is language dominance. This would see anglo-dominant students placed in a "classe d'accueil" until they are proficient to the point where their franco-dominant peers will not be adversely affected by their presence. Otherwise, the danger is that without adequate programming, these francophone schools could conceivably replace the immersion program as an assimilating agent.

The admission policy is also an important tool. In most school jurisdictions studied, the admission policies are such that they align with section 23 of the Charter. However, while this study was being done, one francophone school jurisdiction was in the process of amending its admission policy to allow the children of non-section 23 parents to access francophone schools. The rationale for this change appears to be financial in nature and also based on the belief that section 23 of the Charter is not as inclusive as it could be. For example, section 23 does not include children of immigrant parents who may very well be francophone. Participants in this study also mentioned that section 23 made no provisions to accommodate the children of those families who worked overseas or in Québec and who had become very proficient in the French language. In attempting to address this situation, therefore, that senior officials of this one school jurisdiction are looking to revise their

admission policy. However, given the fragile nature of francophone schools, caution might be exercised to ensure that autonomy is not compromised and further, that the short term goal which may be in part to ensure financial viability is not achieved at the expense of the more long term goal of francophone schooling which is to help to preserve the francophone community.

The last issue to be raised which relates to promotion and recruitment has to do with exclusivity. As the situation now exists, any school jurisdiction can offer a francophone program and can even offer a homogenous francophone school. In many communities, the situation is such that these newly created autonomous school jurisdictions are struggling in terms of numbers to offer viable programs, especially at the secondary level. In light of this situation, some members of the francophone community who support autonomous francophone schools would like to have the exclusive right to offer a francophone program. This could only be done by amending regulations of the current School Act. However, caution might be exercised before proceeding in this direction. Rather than using legislation to potentially gain students, administrators in these autonomous school jurisdictions may well wish to reexamine the programs being offered with the view to designing programs which are more attractive than those currently being offered by majority boards. Eliminating competition through legislation for these autonomous francophone schools may only serve, in the long term, to diminish their status and overall enrollments.

Program Offered

Another area which might be reexamined is the program itself. Is the current program being offered essentially the English program delivered in the French language? If it is, this may be one of the reasons that many section 23 parents are choosing a French immersion program. A francophone program, in order to be considered an alternative, has to offer more than the programs offered by the majority boards.

The first area that educators might examine is the overall program offered. Does it include a strong cultural component? Does the program nurture the community? Do parents have a reason and an obligation to become involved and create a school community? Are opportunities created, besides the Christmas and Spring concerts, where the larger community gathers at the school to provide its support? I believe that a program offered by a francophone school has to not only offer instruction to the students who happen to be enrolled but has to also offer an overall program designed to nurture the partnerships among home, school, community, and perhaps the majority.

Recommendations for the Home

The third vital member of the partnership involves the home. Without the support of the home, it appears, from the literature read as well as this study's findings, that the minority language school cannot single-handedly succeed in providing the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and language required for cultural transmission. In view of this, the home has a vital role to play in supporting the efforts of the school and community.

Although there are many strategies available, I will limit myself to recommending only those which seem obvious yet, from my personal experiences in working in francophone schools, are not consistently being practiced. The first recommendation is that those parents who are proficient in French must use it with their children. Besides providing children with language support, using the minority language in the home will give it status. When children see that the language is valued in the home, this will foster the development of a positive attitude toward the language.

Another suggestion for section 23 parents is that they explore for themselves those services which are available to support the efforts of the home and school. Specifically, parents are encouraged to become members of the larger francophone community and to participate in activities that the larger francophone community may offer. Such services as French language day-care for children, libraries, book stores, as well as community organized sports and francophone festivals all serve to reinforce language and cultural development in the child. The community may provide these services however it remains the responsibility of the individual to access them.

Recommendations for the Majority

The fourth partner to be identified in this study is the majority. According to participants, now that autonomous francophone schools have been established, the majority has a key role in supporting their continued establishment and development. To that end, two issues have been identified. These relate to equity and student evaluation.

Establishing Equity

The first role that the majority might undertake is to ensure that adequate funding is provided. It appears that the provincial funding structure is such that funding levels are determined in large part by enrollments. However, some consideration might be given to the fact that these jurisdictions are new organizations and as such, may not necessarily have

access to all of the support provided by the existing infrastructure. One example which might be used to illustrate this is the consortium that the francophone school jurisdictions have asked the provincial government to establish. Although several of these consortia were established to serve Alberta's school jurisdictions, the majority has to realize that providing a minority language education generates a set of needs which may not be met by a majority language institution. Accordingly, the provincial government would do well to reconsider the request by the Francophone Education Regional Authorities to permit the establish of their own consortium. Expecting that educators working with French minority language students access services provided by these English language consortia is another example of how the majority contributes to the diminished status of the French language and further, contributes to the assimilation of the francophone minority.

Student Evaluation

The second issue relates to the evaluation of students. In Alberta, the Department of Education operates an excellent program designed to measure student growth. As such, students are tested at grades three, six, nine, and twelve. The assessment tools used test students' achievement with respect to programs of studies. However, in francophone schools, there appears to be an issue with English language arts testing, especially at the grade three level. In Alberta, students enrolled in francophone schools begin the study of English language arts in grade three and at that, receive only approximately one half the time that regular English speaking students receive during this introductory year. However, in spite of this, these students have to write the same test given regular English speaking students. Although francophone students do rather well given the circumstances, they tend, as can be expected, to achieve lower results than their English peers. However, in a province where these results are becoming more public and consequently used by parents to determine school choice, the testing program might be reexamined with the view to designing an equitable assessment tool for the francophone student.

Implications for Further Research

This study set out to determine current issues and examine, in part, how these issues are determined and addressed in Alberta's newly established autonomous francophone school jurisdictions. Once having identified the issues, the next phase which may be of interest to both practitioners and researchers might be how to best address these issues. To that end, the following research initiatives might be undertaken.

The first area requiring additional research involves studying the population. From the extant literature, there appears to be some confusion with respect to numbers. Some studies present data according to language use in the home whereas others report data by age clusters. Still, others report these data in terms of the percentage of the total population. To enable practitioners to make sound decisions in the area of minority language schooling, a comprehensive study might be done with a detailed reporting of the population considering such variables as language dominance, age, eligibility according to section 23 of the Charter, parental language, gender, home language use, and location among others.

Policy development is another area which ought to be studied. Although this study examined in part how issues were determined and addressed, a study looking specifically at how leaders in francophone schooling are addressing, through policy development, the five major issues identified in this study might be useful for educational leaders. Such a study would also provide insights into the process of policy development itself and may be of use to leaders in other francophone communities as well as other language groups looking to establish their own autonomous schools

Another study which would provide insights to both practitioners and researchers relates to the issue of school choice. Although school choice could be studied in several ways, a study which examines the reasons why a large number of the majority of section 23 parents do not choose a francophone school would be most useful. Once the reasons have been determined, school administrators would be in a better position to modify programs delivered by these schools in order to better meet the needs of these parents.

This study set out to determine the current issues in francophone schooling. This was achieved by selecting 12 participants who are seen to be leaders in the area. Given that this study found that there were four essential stakeholder groups in francophone schooling, it might be useful to determine what the current issues are from their respective vantages. As such, determining the current issues according to the home, the community, school-based personnel, and the majority, might provide a more complete inventory of issues for key decision makers.

Perhaps the most significant study that might be undertaken relates to the difference that francophone schools make. Homogenous francophone schools have been in existence in Alberta since 1984. Accordingly, there may be the possibility of studying the graduates of these schools to examine the difference that these minority language institutions make in reversing the trends of assimilation. Should the findings of such a study be positive for the

francophone community, the findings would also serve to add credibility to the programs offered by these newly established autonomous francophone school jurisdictions.

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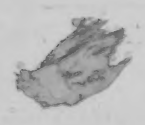

APPENDIX A

Section 23

of the

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

(Canadian Constitution, 1982)

Appendix A

THE CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Section 23

Section 23, which was proclaimed into law in 1982, is as follows:

23(1) Citizens of Canada,

a) whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or

b) Who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province,

have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province.

(2) Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada, have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the same language.

(3) The right of citizens of Canada under subsections (1) and (2) to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province

(a) applies wherever in the province the number of children of citizens who have such a right is sufficient to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction; and

(b) includes, where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds.

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

Appendix B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Questions for Study

1. To enable me to better understand the insights you will be sharing during this interview, would you briefly describe your role and involvement with francophone schooling?

2. Would you describe the context from which you contribute to the development of francophone schools?

3. Would you describe the formal structures which are in place which allow you to contribute to the development of francophone schools?

4. What are the major issues facing these newly established autonomous francophone school jurisdictions? (Possible areas of probing include assimilation -the preservation of language, culture, and identity-, support systems, leadership, personnel, enrollments, etc.)

5. How were these determined to be major issues?

6. Are the issues you have just identified consistent with your own personal assessment of what the major issues are?

7. As a leader in francophone schooling, how do you determine what the key issues are?

   a. -Are there formal structures in place which are used to this end?

   b. -Are there any informal means used to determine current issues?

8. As a leader in francophone schooling, what involvement do you have with important stakeholders such as leaders in the francophone community, the business community, other francophone school jurisdictions, other school jurisdictions, Alberta Education, other provinces and territories, and the federal government?

9. Once a major issue has been identified, how is it addressed?

a. -Through formal means which includes the setting of policies?

b. -Through informal means?

10. What do you see as potential implications for school jurisdictions in Alberta? For francophone school jurisdictions in other provinces and territories of Canada?

11. Would you like to add anything?

APPENDIX C

Participants' Letter

of

Consent

Appendix C

PARTICIPANTS' LETTER OF CONSENT

Richard Slevinsky

#32 Blue Quill Crescent

Edmonton, Alberta, T6J 6C4

Date

Inside Address

Dear participant:

Further to our conversation of (date), this is to confirm that you have agreed to participate in a study relating to the area of policy development in Alberta's newly established francophone school jurisdictions. The initial interview is scheduled for (date and time) at (place).

Accordingly, the interview will focus on the research questions outlined in the attached interview guide. Please feel free to read these and to prepare for the interview in advance.

As I also mentioned to you in our telephone conversation, I am a doctoral student at the University of Alberta in the Department of Educational Policy Studies. One of the requirements of my program is the completion of a thesis. To this end, as a participant in the study, you will agree to:

1. Participate in a recorded interview; and

2. Review the transcript(s) of the interview(s) and make any additions, deletions, and/or changes to ensure that the transcript(s) reflect the intent of the meanings shared.

In fulfilling these steps, you will be providing me with the data required to carry out this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may opt out at any time. As well, I assure you that your participation as well as the information shared by yourself will be treated in a confidential manner. With regard to anonymity, sources will not be revealed and every attempt will be made to conceal your identity.

I sincerely that you for your time, assistance and cooperation in this regard.

Yours truly,

Richard Slevinsky
(436-2813 home)

.....

Consent Form

This is to confirm that I, _____ of _____, Alberta, have agreed to participate in a study which will examine the area of policy development in Alberta's newly established francophone school jurisdictions. I further understand that all information shared will be treated in a confidential manner and further, that every attempt will be made to conceal my identity. In addition, I will have the right to opt out of this study at any time without penalty or risk of any kind.

_____ _____
(Participant) (Date)

_____ _____
(Researcher) (Date)

APPENDIX D

Participating Jurisdictions' Letter

of

Consent

Appendix D

PARTICIPATING JURISDICTIONS' LETTER OF CONSENT

Richard Slevinsky

#32 Blue Quill Crescent

Edmonton, Alberta, T6J 6C4

Date

Inside Address

Dear Superintendent (for school jurisdictions)/Director (for government):

Further to our conversation of (date), this is to confirm that you are aware that I am proposing to conduct a study involving your school jurisdiction. As such, the study will involve researching the "Policy Handbook," "Minutes of Board Meetings," and interviewing senior officials from your jurisdiction. The purpose of the study is to examine the area of policy development in Alberta's newly established francophone school jurisdictions.

As I also mentioned to you in our telephone conversation, I am a doctoral student at the University of Alberta in the Department of Educational Policy Studies. One of the requirements of my program is the completion of a thesis. To this end, participants will be asked to participate in one or more recorded interviews and to review the transcripts to ensure that the data reflect the meanings held. A copy of the interview questions is attached for your perusal.

In fulfilling these steps, participating jurisdictions and individual participants will be providing me with the data required to carry out this study. Participation in this study will be voluntary and participants and participating jurisdictions will be able to opt out at any time. As well, information shared by the participants and participating jurisdictions will be

treated in a confidential manner. With regard to anonymity, sources will not be revealed and every attempt will be made to conceal the identity of both participants and participating jurisdictions.

I sincerely thank you for your time, assistance, and cooperation in this regard and look forward to your reply.

Yours truly,

Richard Slevinsky
(436-2813 home)

.....

Consent Form

This is to confirm that I, _____ of _____ _____ am aware that our school jurisdiction and officials from our jurisdiction/ department will be asked to participate in a study which will examine the area of policy development in Alberta's newly established francophone school jurisdictions. I further understand that all information shared will be treated in a confidential manner and further, that every attempt will be made to conceal the participants' identity. In addition, participants and participating jurisdictions will have the right to opt out of this study at any time without penalty or risk of any kind. In light of these conditions, I authorize you to carry out this research in our school jurisdiction and with participants from our jurisdiction/department.

_____ _____
(Jurisdiction/Department Official) (Date)

_____ _____
(Researcher) (Date)

APPENDIX E

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used

for this study

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APPENDIX F

Résumé

Appendix F

RÉSUMÉ

Education at the University of Alberta

1991 - Present:	Ph.D. (Anticipated date of completion set for Fall of 1997)
1986 - 1990:	M.Ed. (Thesis: A Study of the Initial Experiences of Teachers Recruited to Alberta from Other Provinces for French Language Programs. Thesis selected as one of two completed during 1990 for submission to C.A.S.E.A. awards)
1980 - 1981:	Graduate Diploma in Elementary Education. (Curriculum and Instruction.)
1974 - 1978:	B.Ed. (Elementary Route)

Professional Experience

1997 - Present:	Principal; Calgary Board of Education. Major responsibilities include establishing the Board's first francophone school.
1995 - 1997:	Teacher; the Conseil scolaire régional du Centre-Nord N° 4 on part time release to study at the University of Alberta.
1995 - 1996:	Co-manager for the Curriculum Resources Bank; a consortium of 11 school districts. Major responsibilities included providing professional development workshops for teachers and administrators as well as managing its day to day operations.
1990 - 1995:	Principal and Assistant-Principal; Sherwood Park Catholic Schools.
1988 - 1990:	Senior Consultant, Official Languages Programs; Alberta Advanced Education.
1980 - 1988:	Consultant Second Languages; Department Head, Second Languages; and Teacher; Edmonton Public Schools.
1978 - 1980:	Teacher; Northland School Division # 61.